MOSES AND KHIDR

CONSCIOUSNESS BETWEEN THE TWO SEAS OF REASON AND INTUITION AND AN ANALYSIS BASED ON QURANIC PSYCHOLOGY

LALEH BAKHTIAR

LIBRARY OF ISLAM

Moses and Khidr

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and

An Analysis Based on Quranic Psychology

Laleh Bakhtiar

Library of Islam

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Printed in the United States of America.
Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
Laleh Bakhtiar

Moses and Khidr: Consciousness Between the Two Seas of Reason and Intuition: An Interpretation Based on Quranic Psychology
1. Islam. 2. Sufism. I. Title II. Author

ISBN 10: 1-56744-679-5
ISBN 13: 978-1-56744-679-1

Published by
Great Books of the Islamic World

Distributed by
Kazi Publications, Inc
3023 West Belmont Avenue
Chicago IL 60618
(T) 773-267-7001; (F) 773-267-7002
email: info@kazi.org www.kazi.org

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Preface

In the Name of God, The Merciful, The Compassionate

The Quranic story of Moses and his meeting with "someone who is more knowledgeable than he" at the junction between the two seas is the only story of Moses in the Quran that does not have roots in Biblical texts.

Most readers are probably familiar with who Prophet Moses was, the Prophet who freed the Children of Jacob from the Egyptian Pharaoh. They may be less familiar with the "someone who is more knowledgeable than he," who has sapiental wisdom which is "to taste," "to realize," "to be transformed," having gained knowledge through purifying consciousness (*kashf*) and replacing reason with intuition. As the Quran tells us:

Certainly, there had been in their narratives a lesson for those imbued with intuition. (Q12:111)

The Hadith indicate that Moses meet with "someone who was more knowledgeable than he," whom they designated as Khidr. Khidr is a spiritual guide who comes to people in their dream visions or through clairvoyance. Clairvoyance refers to discernment (*furqan*). It is the power of discerning objects not present to the senses; the power to perceive matters beyond the range of ordinary perception. In other words, it is an experience "beyond perception."

The dream vision world is known as coming from a *barzakh* or barrier or intermediate world between the material, physical world and the spiritual world. It is also known as the *'alam al-mithal* or world of likenesses, home to our creative imagination. As a realm of existence that mediates between different levels of existence, an understanding of this allows dream visions or visionary experiences—which have played a major role in many fields of Muslim life from historiography to medicine—to exist in a special sphere of ex-

istence of its own. They are, as in this case, another method of teaching the spiritual path.

The only fact that we have about this story is that it was part of the revelation received by Prophet Muhammad, peace and the mercy of God be upon him, in the Quran. While we argue that if the intention had been a story involving Moses, it had to have occurred before he was a Prophet/Messenger, we also argue that if Moses was to receive *'ilm laduni*, it had to be through other than a human intermediary. If this being who was "more knowledgeable than" Moses, was Khidr, as the Hadith indicate, he most often appears in dream visions.

The Quran refers to Khidr as "a servant among My servants." Khidr has what is known as *'ilm laduni*, literally, "knowledge from Our side," or direct knowledge that proceeds from the Presence of God without human intermediary. Therefore, the meeting of Moses and Khidr had to be through a dream vision and not that Khidr had assumed a human form. If Khidr had assumed a human form, this would contradict the Quranic narration. He might give Moses knowledge, but not direct knowledge that proceeds from the Presence of God without human intermediary (*'ilm laduni*).[1]

As we learn in Part 2, this narration/anagoge is the story of Moses's heart or consciousness (heart, *qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) fluctuating between reason and learning about "knowledge from Our side," also known as "intuitive experience knowledge" (*ma'rifat*) in his encounter with "one more knowledgeable than he." This experience is a process known as purifying consciousness (*kashf*).[2]

As indicated by the commentator who follows in this text, we do not know when this dream vision took place, but as we will show it had to be early in the life of Moses before he became a Messenger/Prophet.

How do we know this? At some point in the dream vision, Khidr kills a young boy in the presence of Moses. Moses is appalled by this act. If the meeting had occurred later in the life of Moses, that is, after he had been elevated

to a Prophet, God would have given some indication of this in this dream vision of Moses when he was appalled at something that he himself had done. If prophethood had been actualized in him, from the potential to it with which he was born, he would have remembered that he had at some point as a young man, "*killed a soul.*" (Q20:40) This episode in the life of Moses is recorded in the Quran:[3]

You (Moses) *have killed a soul, but We deliverered **you** from grief and We tried **you** with many trials.* (Q20:40)

As a result, Moses had to flee to Median before he had been given prophethood.

*Then, **you** had lingered in expectation years among the people of Midian.* (Q20:40)

In addition, God says in the Quran regarding Moses: *I chose him to Myself.*[4] This would only happen after prophethood had been given to Moses resulting in a very different response from Khidr. Khidr would not have said to someone God *had chosen to Myself: You will not be able to bear patiently with me.*

According to many of the traditional commentators who say that Khidr was a Prophet who represents the esoteric dimension and that Moses was a Prophet at the time of this meeting, indicating that Moses was simply the exponent of the Divine Law, the exoteric dimension of Islam, yet the Quran clearly states that at some point:

God spoke directly to Moses, speaking directly. (Q4:104)

This sign/verse (Q4:104) confirms that Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, received *'ilm laduni* at the time of his prophethood. *'Ilm laduni* is direct knowledge that proceeds from His Presence without any human intermediary. We know from this story that Moses was not able to bear pa-

tiently with Khidr at the time of this event. Therefore, *God spoke directly to Moses, speaking directly,* (Q4:104), had to have come after this event. If he were a Prophet at the time of this dream vision with Khidr, he would already have been taught *'ilm laduni* so this meeting with Khidr would not have been necessary.

In addition, in order to be chosen as a Messenger-Prophet, that person must be able to *teach us what we know not.*

> *We sent to you a Messenger from among you who recounts Our signs to you, and makes you pure, and teaches you the Book and wisdom, and teaches you what you know not.* (Q2:151)

If Moses had been a Prophet at the time of this event, he would needed to have already had *'ilm laduni. Teach us what we do not know* (Q2:151) then, may refer to knowing the inner meaning of outer forms and actions that begins by knowing "self" as Prophet Muhammad, peace and the mercy of God be upon him, said in a well-known Hadith: He who knows his "self," knows his Lord.[5]

The *two seas* may refer to Moses and Khidr themselves as representatives of two "seas of knowledge.

> The fresh water rivers with their linear and directional nature, symbolize rational thought and knowledge of the Divine Law that leads to salvation or to God, while the saltwater sea, with its vastness, unpredictable currents and fathomless depth symbolizes deep inner knowledge and the infinite and all-encompassing nature of Divine Knowledge or the Divine Itself, which human beings cannot "penetrate" with linear or logical forms of knowing, just as the freshwater of the rivers cannot penetrate the barrier between the two seas.[6]

Part 1 contains the commentary of the knowledge of the sweet sea of reason, the cognitive process used by Moses in his encounter with "one more knowledgeable than he." This commentary is from Sayyid Qutb's *In the Shade of the Quran.*

The inclusion of this commentary by Sayyid Qutb (d 1966) is because of his conservative views which take the Quranic signs/verses literally through a strict use of the outer interpretation only. If we only understand it through our ability to reason, as the commentary by Sayyid Qutb does, then, we are faced with the misinterpretation by some that it justifies "honor killing."

> Some misguided individuals have distorted the killing of a boy by Khidr to claim that it sanctions 'honor killing'. They have taken this innocent story to say that 'a father can kill his son' without getting punished under Islamic Law.[7]

In addition, there are other problems that Maulana Maududi mentions when one only interprets this narration using reason:

> In connection with this story, a very hard problem arises to which an answer must be found. Two of the three things done by Khidr are obviously against those commandments of the law which have always been in force since the creation of man. No law allows anyone the right to damage the property of another and kill an innocent person. So much so that if a man were to know by inspiration that some usurper would illegally seize a certain boat, and that a certain boy would be involved in a rebellion and unbelief, even then no law, sent down by God, makes it lawful that one should bore a hole in the boat and kill the innocent boy by virtue of his inspiration.
>
> If in answer to this, one were to say that Khidr committed these two acts by the commands of God, this does not solve the problem, for the question is not this: "By whose command did Khidr commit these acts," but it is this: "What was the nature of these commands?"
>
> This is important because Khidr did these acts in accordance with divine command, for he himself says that these acts of his were not done by his own authority, but

were moved by the mercy of God, and God Himself has testified this by saying: *We taught him knowledge that proceeds from Our Presence.* (Q18:65)

Thus, it is beyond any doubt that these acts were done by the command of God, but the question about the nature of the command remains, for it is obvious that these commands were not legal because it is not allowed by any divine law, and the fundamental principles of the Quran also do not allow that a person should kill another person without any proof of his guilt.

Therefore, we shall have to admit that these commands belonged to one of those decrees of God in accordance with which one sick person recovers, while another dies: one becomes prosperous and the other is ruined. If the commands given to Khidr were of this nature, then one must come to the conclusion that Khidr was an angel (or some other kind of God's creation) who is not bound by the divine law prescribed for human beings, for such commands as have no legal aspect, can be addressed to angels only. This is because the question of the lawful or the unlawful cannot arise about them: They obey the commands of God without having any personal power.

In contrast to them, a man shall be guilty of a sin whether he does any such thing inadvertently by intuition or by some inspiration, if his act goes against some divine commandment. This is because a man is bound to abide by divine commandments as a man, and there is no room whatsoever in the divine law that an act may become lawful for a man merely because he had received an instruction by inspiration and had been informed in a secret way of the wisdom of that unlawful act.

The above mentioned principle has been unanimously accepted by scholars of the divine law and the leaders of Sufism, Allamah Alusi has cited in detail the sayings of Abdul Wahhab Shiirani, Muhy-ud-Din ibn-Arabi, Mujaddid Alf Thani, Shaikh Abdul-Qadir Jilani, Junaid Baghdadi, Sirri Saqti, Abul-Hussain An-Nuri, Abu Said-al- Kharraz, Ahmad ud-Dainauri and Imam Ghazzali to this effect that it is not lawful even for a Sufi

to act in accordance with that inspiration of his own which goes against a fundamental of law.[8]

That is why we have come to the conclusion that Khidr must be an angel, or some other kind of God's creation, exempted from human law, for he could not be the only exception to the above mentioned formula. Therefore, we inevitably come to the conclusion that he was one of those servants of God who act in accordance with the will of God and not in accordance with the divine law prescribed for human beings.

We would have accepted the theory that Khidr was a human being, if the Quran had plainly asserted that the servant to whom Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was sent for training, was a man. But the Quran does not specifically say that he was a human being but says that he was one of Our servants which does not show that he was necessarily a human being. Besides this, there is no tradition which specifically says that Khidr was a human being. In the authentic traditions related by Said bin Jubair, Ibn Abbas, Ubayy bin Kaab from the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Arabic word *rajul* has been used for Khidr, which though generally used for human beings, is not exclusively used for human beings.

In the Quran itself, this word has been used for jinns also (Surah Al-Jinn, Ayat 6). It is also obvious that when a jinn or an angel or an invisible being will come before a human being, he will surely come in human shape and, in that form; he will be called a *bashar* (man), just like the angel who came before Mary in the shape of a human being (Surah Maryam, Ayat 17).

Thus the word *rajul*, used for Khidr in the above mentioned tradition by the Prophet (peace be upon him), does not necessarily mean that he was a human being. Therefore, we are quite justified in the light of the above discussion to believe that Khidr was one of the angels or some other kind of God's creation who is not bound by the divine law prescribed for human beings. Some of the former scholars of the Quran have also expressed the same opinion which has been cited by Ibn Kathir in his commentary on the authority of Mawardi.[9]

Part 2 contains a commentary on the inner meaning of this Quranic story and how it is applied to the spiritual way or the spirit of the Law which, then, eliminates the doubts that using "reason" alone creates.

Based on Kashani's commentary, it becomes clear that this story is not just a narration, but an anagoge as well. That is, an interpretation of a sacred text that finds beyond the literal, allegorical and moral sense, a fourth and ultimate spiritual or mystical sense.

It concerns the knowledge symbolized by the salty sea of intuition, the cognitive process used by the "one more knowledgeable than" Moses.

'Abd al-Razzaq Kashani (d 1329) was a defender and proponent of the thought of the mystic Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 1240). His *tafsir* is relatively brief for a commentary—about a thousand pages in two volumes.[10]

Part 3 contains an analysis from the perspective of Quranic Psychology. It is closer to that of Kashani than to that of Sayyid Qutb as it explains the inner journey that seekers undertake in order to attain to intuitive experience knowledge (*ma'rifat*) or irfan (gnosis).

Therefore, the Messenger/Prophets have to *teach us what we do not know*, including knowing the outer and inner meaning of things. This may be why God sent him Khidr in his dream vision so that Moses would learn of intuitive experience knowledge and what "knowledge directly from the Presence of God without any human intermediary" is in order to prepare him for prophethood.

Even though consciousness as symbolized by Moses continues to use reason throughout the encounter with *'ilm laduni*, it is guided to know the inner "meaning" of things, "meaning" itself being the spirit of the form. As we will see in this commentary from the perspective of Quranic Psychology, he becomes aware of this knowledge through guidance by means of a method known as "purifying the heart" (*kashf*).

Through this narration/anagoge, the Quranic signs/

verses revealed to Prophet Muhammad, peace and the mercy of God be upon him, are *to teach us what we know not.*

Endnotes to the Preface

1 See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Volume IV, pp 696ff.

2 *Kashf* is most often translated into English as "unveiling." However, similarly to the use of the word "heart," it is a vague term that needs further clarification for a psychologist to be able to place it within the human being. *Kashf* also means "purification of consciousness" so that it how it has been translated in this text.

While many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars—traditional and modern—have explained the Quranic use of "heart" as consciousness, it has not entered the science of Islamic psychology as an actual replacement for the Quranic use of the word "heart" as is done in this text. Over the years of research and study of multiple Islamic sciences, I have often echoed the words of Abul Hasan Ali ibn Sahl al-Isfahani, a friend of al-Junayd, who gives expression to the wide-and vague-sense in which the term "heart" was used, when he says: "From the time of Adam to the resurrection people cry: The heart, the heart. I wish that I might find someone to describe what the heart is or how it is, but I find none. What, then, is this heart, of which I hear only the name? That is to say: If I call intellect the heart, it is not the heart. If I call spirit the heart, it is not the heart. If I call knowledge the heart, it is not the heart. All the evidences of Truth exist in the heart, yet only the name of it is to be found." Ali Hujwiri, *Kashf al-mahjub*, p 144.

3 The Quran does not say that this was an "accidental" death although the Hadith so indicate.

4 The only other time God refers to "Myself" in the Quran is in reference to the Christ (Messiah), Jesus, when He says: *God said: O Jesus! I will be One Who Gathers you and One Who Elevates you to Myself.* (Q3:55)

5 The two seas thus serve as a symbol of the different kinds of Divine Knowledge possessed by Moses and Khidr—Moses represents Divine Knowledge as manifested in Divine Law, and Khidr represents Divine Knowledge in direct and immediate form, the acquisition of which is the goal of the mystical path (Q18:65). If this verse is read as an anagoge for the nature of the soul, then the two seas can refer to the world of the spirit and the world of bodies with the human soul representing the junction or the meeting point of these two realms. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Editor, *The Study Quran*, p 749.

6 The Quran refers to "self" when it uses the word, *nafs*, reflexively.

7 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Editor, *Study Quran*, p 749.

8 https://discover-the-truth.com/2014/10/23/quran-1865-81-al-khidr-and-moses-

9 Mahmud al-Alusi, *Ruh-ul-Maani*, Vol. XVI, pp 16-18.

10 https://discover-the-truth.com/2014/10/23/quran-1865-81-al-khidr-and-moses-musa/.

11 The translation of the commentary by Kashani is quoted from the translation I did from the Arabic that is published in *Moral Healer's Handbook: The Psychology of Spiritual Chivalry.*

Like many others, 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Kashani drew upon the writings of the 'Greatest Master' in a creative fashion. He did not simply reproduce Ibn 'Arabi's ideas or methods.... Rather ... he drew upon Ibn 'Arabi's language, concepts, and tendencies to craft his own system of mystical-philosophical theology and hermeneutic. Having studied Avicennian philosophy before embracing Sufism via Ibn 'Arabi, al-Kashani's mystical-philosophical 'system' draws upon both traditions. His writings—several of which are commentaries upon the work of Ibn 'Arabi—tend to have a highly pedagogical edge to them, both in intention and in format and composition. Suffice to say, al-Kashani is a much easier writer to read than Ibn 'Arabi. This is not to say his ideas or language are simple, however; they are not. But they are deliberately more accessible and systematic than Ibn 'Arabi's works. Kashani, like many other 'specialized' commentators in other 'genres' of commentary, engages in selective commentary, rather than trying to comment on every single line. His concerns are, as might be expected ... are philosophical-mystical. His exegetical method in most of the commentary might be described as 'anagogical'.
https://thicketandthorp.com/2012/06/07/the-palm-tree-of-the-soul-the-mystical-philosophical-tafsir-of-abd-al-razzaq-al-kashani/.

Quranic Signs/Verses

Chapter 18: The 69th Chapter Revealed

Makkah: (Mention) *when Moses*
said to his servant:
I will not quit until I reach
the place of meeting of the two seas
even if I will go on for many years. (18:60)
But when they reached
the place of the meeting between them,
then, they both forgot their great fish
and it took to Itself a way through the sea,
burrowing. (18:61)
Then, when they crossed, he said to his servant:
Give us our break-fast.
Certainly, we met fatigue from our journey. (18:62)
He said: Consider this!
When we took shelter at the rock,
truly, I forgot the great fish.
None but Satan caused me to forget to remember it.
It took to itself to a way into the sea
in a wondrous way. (18:63)
He said: That is what we had been looking for!
So they went back following their footsteps. (18:64)
Then, they found a servant among Our servants
to whom We gave mercy from Us
and We taught him knowledge
that proceeds from Our Presence. (18:65)
Moses said to him: May I follow ***you***
so that ***you*** *will teach me something of what*
you *were taught of right judgment?* (18:66)
He said: Truly, ***you*** *will never be able*
to have patience with me. (18:67)
How will ***you*** *endure a thing patiently*
when ***you*** *have not comprehended*
any awareness of it? (18:68)
He said: ***You*** *will find me, if God wills,*

one who remains steadfast
and I will not rebel against ***your*** *command.* (18:69)
He said: Then, if ***you*** *follow me,*
ask me not about anything
until I cause to be evoked in ***you***
a remembrance of it. (18:70)
So they both set out until
when they embarked in a vessel.
He made a hole in it.
He said: Had ***you*** *made a hole in it*
in order to drown the people?
Certainly, ***you*** *had brought about*
a dreadful thing! (18:71)
He said: Did I not say that ***you*** *would never be able*
to have patience with me? (18:72)
He said: Take me not to task for what I forgot
and constrain me not
with hardship for my affair. (18:73)
Then, they both set out until when they met a boy;
then, he killed him.
He said: Have ***you*** *killed a pure soul*
without his having slain a soul?
Certainly, ***you*** *had brought about*
a horrible thing! (18:74)
He said: Did I not say that ***you*** *will never be able*
to have patience with me? (18:75)
Moses said: If I asked ***you*** *about anything after this,*
then, keep not company with me.
Surely, ***you*** *have reached* (enough) *of excusing*
from my presence! (18:76)
Then, they both set out
until when they approached a people of a town.
They asked its people for food.
They refused to receive them as guests.
Then, they found in it a wall
that wants to tumble down, so he repaired it.
Moses said: If ***you*** *had willed,*

*certainly, **you** would have taken compensation*
*to **yourself** for it.* (18:77)
He said: This is the parting between me
*and between **you**!*
*I will tell **you** the interpretation*
*for which **you** were not able to have*
patience for it. (18:78)
As for the vessel, it had been of some needy (people)
who toiled in the sea,
so I wanted to mar it as there had been
a king after them
taking every vessel forcefully. (18:79)
As for the boy, both his parents
had been ones who believe,
and we dreaded that he should constrain them
with defiance and ingratitude, (18:80)
so we wanted their Lord to cause for them
in exchange one better than he
in purity and nearer in sympathy. (18:81)
As for the wall, it had been that
of two orphan boys in the city
and beneath it had been a treasure for them.
The father of both of them
had been one who acted in accord with morality
*so **your** Lord wanted that they be fully grown,*
having come of age,
*and pull out their treasure as a mercy from **your** Lord.*
I accomplished that not of my own command.
*This is the interpretation of what **you** were*
not able to have patience for it. (18:82)

Part 1
The Sweet Sea of Reason
Commentary by Sayyid Qutb (d 1966)
Based on Reason

This part ... begins by relating an episode in the life of the Prophet Moses which is not told or hinted at anywhere else in the Quran. The chapter does not give details of where this episode took place other than saying, *the place of the meeting of the two seas.* Nor does it define the period in Moses lifetime when the events took place. Thus, we do not know whether the events related took place when Moses was still in Egypt, before he led the Children of Jacob on their way to Palestine, or after they had left it. If the latter, was it before he led them into the Holy Land, or when they stopped, refusing to enter because they did not wish to confront its powerful inhabitants? Was it after they had begun their forty years of wandering in the land, going to and fro, in total loss?

The event involves a goodly servant of God's whom Moses meets and accompanies for a period of time. But the verses do not give us any details of the identity of this person. It does not mention his name or status. Was he a Prophet, a Messenger, a scholar, or a person favored by God for his strong faith and complete dedication to the service of His cause?

(Mention) ***when Moses said to his servant: "I will not quit until I reach the place of meeting of the two seas.*** (Q18:60)

Most probably, and God knows best, the place described here as the place where the two seas meet refers to the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and their meeting place is the area where the Bitter lakes and the Timsah lake are found along the Suez Canal. It may also be a reference to the meeting point of the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqabah at the northern end of the Red Sea. This whole area witnessed the history of the Children of Jacob after they left Egypt. Anyway, the Quran only refers to it

in passing without defining it further. There are several other reports suggesting where the area was that the two seas meet, but we feel these are all unacceptable.

But when they reached the place of the meeting between them, then, they both forgot their great fish and it took to itself a way through the sea, burrowing. (Q18:61) ***Then, when they crossed, he said to his servant: Give us our break-fast. Certainly, we met fatigue from our journey.*** (Q18:62)

(The servant) ***said: Consider this! When we took shelter at the rock, truly, I forgot the great fish. None but Satan caused me to forget to remember it. It took to itself to a way into the sea in a wondrous way.*** (Q18:63)

But when they reached

the place of the meeting between the two seas, they

forgot the great fish, and ***it took to itself a way through the sea***

and disappeared from sight. After they had marched on for some distance. (Q18:61-63)

He said: That is what we had been looking for! So they went back following their footsteps. (Q18:64) ***Then, they found a servant among Our servants to whom We gave mercy from Us and We taught him knowledge that proceeds from Our Presence.*** (Q18:65)

Most probably, the fish was cooked. Its raising back to life and its moving straight into the sea was a sign given by God to Moses so that he would know the place where he was to meet the man. This is indicated by the amazement expressed by the servant when he saw the fish swimming in the sea. Had the fish only dropped into the sea and settled at the bottom, there would be nothing strange in the matter. What makes this interpretation more plausible is that the whole trip was full of surprises that go beyond imagination, and this was only one of them.

Moses realized that he had gone beyond the place

where he was to meet the man, which was by the rock where he and his servant had stayed for a little rest. Hence he traced his way back to it and there they met the man they sought. (Q18:64-18:65)

It also seems that this meeting was to remain Moses' secret, given to him by his Lord. His servant did not know anything about it until they met the man. Therefore, the following scenes in the story speak only about Moses and the pious man endowed with knowledge.

First Jolting Shock: Moses addresses the pious sage in a most polite manner. It is the sort of politeness that is worthy of a Prophet. He puts his request, without making any assumptions, and he makes it clear that he seeks proper knowledge from a good servant of God:

The man's knowledge however is nothing like human knowledge with its immediate causes and inevitable results. It is a part of divine knowledge that God has granted him, according to a measure He determined and for a purpose He wanted to accomplish. Moses could not be expected to be patient with the man and his actions, even though Moses was a Prophet and a Messenger from God. Looked at superficially, these actions may appear to have no logical justification whatsoever. They could not be understood without having access to the wisdom dictating them, and that is part of divine wisdom that people cannot begin to comprehend.

(Khidr) ***said: Truly, you will never be able to have patience with me.*** (Q18:67)

How will you endure a thing patiently when you have not comprehended any awareness of it? (Q18:68)

Moses said: You will find me, if God wills, one who remains steadfast and I will not rebel against your command. (Q18:69)

The sage understandably fears that Moses may not have the patience required to make of him a comfortable companion. (Q18:67-18:68) But Moses is so eager to learn. Hence he resolves to be very patient and obedient,

seeks God's help and places God's will ahead of his own resolve. (Q18:69)

He said: Then, if you follow me, ask me not about anything until I cause to be evoked in you a remembrance of it. (Q18:70)

The man reiterates the difficulties ahead, stating to Moses a condition for his companionship: That he remain patient and not question the sage about any action he takes until he himself reveals its purpose. (Q18:70)

So they both set out until when they embarked in a vessel. He made a hole in it. Moses said: Had you made a hole in it in order to drown the people? Certainly, you had brought about a dreadful thing! (Q18:71)

Soon afterwards comes the first scene from the trip. (Q18:71) This is certainly a strange thing to do. The boat carried both men as well as other passengers. They are all in the middle of the sea when the sage makes a hole in the boat. On the surface, this is an action that exposes the boat and all its passengers to the risk of being drowned. Why would anyone, let alone a learned and devout person, do such an evil thing?

Confronted with such an apparently outrageous action, Moses simply forgets the conversation that he had had with the sage. A human being may accept something when it is discussed in abstract terms, but when he faces it in practice and looks at its consequences, his reaction may be totally different. Practical matters have a totally different effect. Here we see Moses, having already been warned against apparently outrageous actions and having resolved to remain patient, loses all patience when faced with a tough situation.

With such an impulsive nature, Moses could not be patient when he saw his companion making a hole in the boat. He forgot all about his promise. Human nature is shown not to comprehend matters fully except through

practical experience. Hence Moses says in objection: (Q18:71)

(Khidr) *said: Did I not say that you will never be able to have patience with me?* (Q18:72)
Moses said: Take me not to task for what I forgot and constrain me not with hardship for my affair. (Q18:73)

But the sage tolerates this with patience, and he gently reminds Moses of what he said earlier. (Q18:72) Moses now regrets his overreaction, saying that he completely forgot. He requests the man to accept his apologies and not to rebuke him. (Q18:73) The man accepts his apologies and the two proceed further.

Then, they both set out until when they met a boy; then, he killed him. Moses said: Had you killed a pure soul without his having slain a soul? Certainly, you had brought about a horrible thing! (Q18:74)

There are, however, other strange events awaiting Moses which would exhaust his patience. (Q18:74)

The first action exposed the boat and its passengers to certain risks. Now there is the blatant murder of a young man without provocation or justification. This was too much for Moses to tolerate patiently, despite all the promises he had given not to question anything he saw. (Q18:74)

This suggests that Moses was not unmindful of his promise. He probably remembered it, but felt unable to keep quiet when he witnessed a murder. To him, the young man was innocent. He had not perpetrated anything to justify his killing. He was perhaps even under age, so that he could not be held accountable for any misdeeds.

(Khidr) *said: Did I not that you will never be able to have patience with me?* (Q18:75)

Once again the sage reminds Moses of the condition

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(Khidr) ***said: Did I not that you will never be able to have patience with me?*** (Q18:75)

Once again the sage reminds Moses of the condition

he has made and the promises Moses has given, referring also to what he said in the first place. (Q18:75) This time, however, the sage goes further and reminds Moses that he said all this to him personally. So the early warning was addressed to Moses personally, but he was not convinced. He had sought to be the man's companion accepting his conditions.

Moses said: If I asked you about anything after this, then, keep not company with me, surely, you had reached **(enough)** ***of excusing from my presence!*** (Q18:76)

Again Moses reasons, knowing that he has broken his promises twice, forgetting it despite reminders. His regret makes him too apologetic, depriving himself of any possibility of a lengthy companionship with the sage. He gives himself only one last chance. (Q18:76)

Then, they both set out until when they approached a people of a town. They asked its people for food. But they refused to receive them as guests. Then, they found in it a wall that wants to tumble down, so (Khidr) ***repaired it. Moses said: If you had willed, certainly, you would have taken compensation to yourself for it.*** (Q18:77)

This brings us to the third and last scene where they asked its people for food, but they refused them all hospitality. There they found a wall on the point of falling down, and [the sage] rebuilt it. (Q18:77)

The two are hungry but find themselves in a town whose population is extremely inhospitable. They receive no guests and give nothing to the poor and hungry. Yet the man finds a wall there about to fall down. The Arabic text is more vivid, making the wall almost like a living creature with a will that makes it want to fall. Yet this stranger occupies himself with rebuilding the wall for nothing.

Moses finds the situation full of irony. Why should such a stranger exert so much effort in rebuilding a wall in a town where they were denied even a little food and all

hospitality? He should have at least demanded some money for his labors and then they could have bought some food to eat. He says: Had you wished, you could have taken payment for what you did. (Q18:77)

This signaled the end of this unlikely companionship. Moses no longer had any excuse to offer. (Q18:78)

Up to this point Moses, as well as everyone following the story, have been subjected to a series of surprises with no indication as to their meaning or purpose. Our response is the same as that of Moses. We do not even know who the person was who did such singular acts. The Quran does not tell us his name, in order to add to the general air of bafflement surrounding us.

But what would his name add? The sage simply represents higher divine wisdom that does not attach results to their immediate causes. It aims to explain that there are objectives of which we may know nothing about. Hence, keeping his name from us fits in well with the abstract concept he represents.

Furthermore, higher forces dictate the development of the story right from the beginning. Moses is so keen to meet this man, he travels until he is totally worn out. But his servant leaves their food at the rock where they stopped to rest. But his forgetfulness is the cause of their return only to find the man at that very spot. Had they traveled on, they would have missed him. The whole atmosphere is shrouded in secrecy, just like the man's name.

(Khidr) ***said: This is the parting between me and between you! I will tell you the interpretation of what you were not able to have patience for it.*** (Q18:78)

As for the vessel, it had been of some needy (people) ***who toil in the sea, so I wanted to mar it as there had been a king after them taking every vessel forcefully.*** (Q18:79)

The secret is then revealed: As for the boat, it belonged to some needy people who toiled upon the sea—and I desired to slightly damage it because behind them there was a king who was taking every boat by force. (Q18:79) This

explains that the small damage the boat suffered was enough to save it for its people. Had it been seaworthy, it would certainly have been confiscated by the tyrannical king. Perpetrating some small damage to the boat saved it from the greater harm and ruinous injustice that was certain to take place without it. Hence, causing such damage was a good and kindly action.

As for the boy, both his parents had been ones who believe, and we dreaded that he should constrain them with defiance and ingratitude, (Q18:80) ***so we wanted their Lord to cause for them in exchange one better than he in purity and nearer in sympathy.*** (Q18:81)

As for the young man, his parents were true believers, and we feared lest he should cause them much grief by his overweening wickedness and unbelief. So we desired that their Lord grant them in his stead [a son] of greater purity than him, and closer in loving tenderness. (Q18:80-18:81)

This young man appeared at the time to be deserving of no punishment, but God revealed his true nature to the sage. We realize now that he harbored all the seeds of wickedness and unbelief that were bound to increase as he grew up. Had he lived, he would have caused his parents, believers as they were, too much trouble. He might have led them, out of love for him, to follow him in his wickedness. Hence, God directed His goodly servant to kill the boy in order to replace him with one who would be better and more dutiful.

Had the matter been left to human knowledge, the sage could not have treated the boy except on the basis of what appeared to him. He would have had no justification in killing him, particularly since the boy appeared to be still under age, having done nothing to deserve capital punishment. It is not up to anyone, other than God Himself or one to whom God imparts knowledge from Him personally, to judge anyone on the basis of his nature. Nor is it permissible to make such knowledge the basis of any action other than that which appearances allow. But God

may command what He wills, as He does in this case.

I accomplished that not of my own command. This is the interpretation of what you were not able to have patience for it. (Q18:82)

As for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys living in the town, and beneath it was buried a treasure belonging to them. Their father had been a righteous man. So your Lord has willed it that when they come of age they should dig up their treasure by your Lord's grace. (Q18:82)

This wall that the sage labored to rebuild, asking no wages for his labors despite the refusal of hospitality from the townspeople, had a treasure underneath. This treasure belonged to two young orphans in the town. Had the wall been left to fall down, the treasure would have become visible and the two boys would not have been able to claim it, considering their weakness. Since their father was a pious and righteous man, God allowed his children to benefit by his piety while they were weak. He willed to give them the time necessary to grow up and dig up their treasure when they were in a position to keep it.

The sage then disowns any share in this whole matter. It is God's grace that dictated all his actions. It was all by God's command who had imparted to him the necessary knowledge in such cases and others, showing him what to do in each case: *I accomplished that not of my own command.* (Q18:82)

Thus the secret is made clear, and all the actions of the sage that seemed preposterous in the first instance appear to be simple and wise. Now that the curtain has been removed and the secret revealed, the man disappears totally from the scene and no further mention is made of him in this chapter nor indeed throughout the rest of the Quran. The story itself represents God's great wisdom, which reveals itself only when and as needed.

Within the context of the whole chapter, this story about Moses and the sage is closely linked to the story of the young sleepers in the cave. Both agree that what lies beyond our human perception should be left totally to

God, who will conduct it on the basis of His perfect and absolute knowledge. As for us, we know only what is told to us.

Part 2
The Salty Sea of Intuition
Commentary by Abd al-Razzaq Kashani (d 1329) Based on Intuition

The spiritual hermeneutics of the story follows:

This is the outer explanation of what was told (in the Quran and earlier scriptures) and there is no denying miracles herein. As for the inward meaning, it is this:

(Mention) *when Moses said to his servant:*

When Moses, the heart, said to his servant (Joshua), the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*), when the animal soul clung to the body because of its physical desires and demands,

I will not quit,

that is, I will not separate myself from the spiritual journey (*sayr*) and traveling. I will not stop walking or traveling towards my spiritual goal,

until I reach the place of meeting of the two seas even if I will go on for many years. (Q18:60)

that is, the *barzakh* or barrier which is the place of meeting of the two seas or worlds: the world of the body and the world of the spirit. Of the two seas within the human being, one is salty (pure) and one is sweet (impure). Their junction is at the station of the heart.

But when they reached the place of the meeting between them,

that is, the two seas, the place where forces of the soul meet in a combined form,

they both forgot their great fish,

that is, their spiritual nourishment. The animal soul (his servant) and the heart had been distracted in their efforts to guard their spiritual nourishment. They had been preoccupied with other, higher goals and had forgotten the spiritual nourishment because of the constant, persistent demands of the animal soul's desires to be met. The spiritual nourishment was what the animal soul and the heart needed. The heart had commanded the animal soul to carry the spiritual nourishment with them and to care for it at the time they established the firm intention to undertake their spiritual struggle. Then, mysteriously the spiritual nourishment came back to life and

it took to itself a way

burrowed a path for itself and dove

through the sea, burrowing, (Q18:61),

into the sea of the body, living as it had been at first, burrowing, digging a large hole. As a result of this wide opening, its path through the waters became clearly marked and the sea waves did not close in on it. Its way remained in the open sea. The heart was asleep when the fish took its own way into the sea, but, as it says: *and the servant* (the animal soul) *was awake.* Thus, the animal soul (the servant) was made by its imagination to forget. The heart forgot to remind the animal soul about the fish because its spiritual state was one of negligence (i.e. it had fallen asleep).

This is similar to the crossing of the Red Sea whereby the path permitted Prophet Moses and his people to cross while it drowned Pharaoh and his army. That is, the path created by spiritual nourishment will only allow the believer to tread.

At that junction, the heart became exhausted, weary and extremely hungry for spiritual nourishment. Then it remembered the spiritual nourishment although the heart had not experienced weariness or hunger previous to this

moment in the spiritual struggle. Upon remembering the spiritual nourishment, the heart thought about satisfying its needs. It asked the animal soul for the needed spiritual nourishment, saying:

Give us our break-fast.

This indicates that the heart is experiencing a longing in the light of day where it is conscious of the body and its needs as opposed to what it experienced in the womb (before the birth of the animal soul) where desires are dormant and spiritual nourishment is driven directly into the body through the mother and without personal input or feeling the need for it, the heart said,

Certainly, we met fatigue from our journey. (Q18:62)

That is, the exhaustion and difficulties associated with giving birth to the animal soul. The animal soul replied,

Did you see? When we took shelter at the rock,

or the breast to feed,

truly, I forgot the great fish,

the spiritual nourishment, because it was not needed then.

None but Satan

the one without hope,

caused me to forget

the animal soul says, by clouding "my conscience." It is also narrated that the heart was resting when the spiritual nourishment came alive again and dove into the sea of the body. However, the animal soul had been awake, guarding the heart when Satan caused the animal soul to forget the spiritual nourishment. The animal soul had been guarding

the heart and the spiritual nourishment which was for it.

Even though the animal soul had remained awake and vigilant over the heart, it was made forgetful of the spiritual nourishment by Satan. In the same way that Satan had caused Adam to eat of the forbidden, so Satan caused the animal soul to forget the spiritual nourishment. Spiritual nourishment then burrowed its path into the body. The animal soul added,

forget to remember it.

that is, Satan made the animal soul forgetful of the spiritual nourishment. This is because the state of the animal soul was distracted.

The heart had been asleep (unconscious) and forgot the spiritual nourishment because the heart had been overwhelmed, astonished, bewildered, shocked by its birth—

It took to itself to a way into the sea in a wondrous way. (Q18:63)

What was amazing was the hole through which the spiritual nourishment passed. The spiritual nourishment escaped and made its own way, which is the way of the animal soul, which naturally behaves like a youth who is rebellious and wants to make its own way by itself. It is in the nature of youth to try to escape and this is also the nature of the animal soul. The heart, now awake says:

That is what we had been looking for!

means the freedom of the fish (spiritual nourishment) and the taking of its way (i.e. it is in the nature of the fish or spiritual nourishment to be free). *That is what we have been looking for* because it was at the meeting of the two seas that it had been promised a meeting with "the being who is more knowing than it." The ascent towards perfection is by no other way than through this station, the following of intuition (ie. symbolized by the fish or spiritual nourishment who becomes the sacred intellect).

This is the meeting that had been promised to the heart if it were turned towards spiritual nourishment, if it remembered its spiritual aspect. It is promised to the heart that it will meet something more knowledgeable than itself, that is, intuition or the sacred intellect (*'aql al-qudsi*). Rising to the state of perfection must be done through guidance from the sacred intellect and this will only happen at that junction where the two seas meet.

So they went back

by ascending towards the station of their first, innate nature (*fitrat Allah*). In returning to the state of the innate nature originated by God (*fitrat Allah*), the state in which Adam had been created, a state they had been in at an earlier stage (like Adam and Eve's original nature before they did what they had been forbidden to do), the heart, also, had forgotten, forgotten the spiritual nourishment because it had been bewildered, amazed.

following their footsteps, (Q18:64),

that is, following their steps of the arc of descent by ascending towards perfection until they found the sacred intellect. Descending, falling, they retraced their steps in moving towards perfection and wisdom towards the Real. They retraced back until they met intuition/inspiration, the sacred intellect.

Then, they found a servant among Our servants to whom We gave mercy from Us.

He was a servant from among God's servants, special through an extra assistance and support in times of hardship and distress and merciful compassion. They met one who had been given essential perfection, spiritual perfection, by being detached from the four elements and the material world, thereby attaining the spiritual, being above direction, absolute radiant splendor which is the retracing of the story of being near to God and in His Presence, and:

We taught him knowledge,

that is, spiritual perfection by having been stripped of the material; due to the sacredness of the mode and pure illumination which are the effects of nearness and the Presence of direct knowledge without any human intermediary (*'ilm laduni*), which is sacred knowledge

that proceeds from Our Presence. (Q18:65)

Sacred knowledge proceeds directly from the Presence of God. It is knowledge that contains universally inspired realities without any intervention of human teaching. That is, there is something inside the human being which recognizes God and that is His own knowledge from the sacred, Divine knowledge and absolute Truth, which came to the heart without need of any human intermediary to teach and which is not acquired through the world of creation and any human creature, but only from what He Himself. The heart said: to (the sacred intellect, intuition/inspiration):

May I follow you so that you will teach me something of what you were taught of right judgment? (Q18:66)

This is the manifestation of the decision to take the Way, to be of good conduct and to ascend towards perfection. The sacred intellect (intuition, inspiration) said:

Truly, you will never be able to have patience with me. (Q18:67)

That is, you have no knowledge of the hidden orders of the spiritual and the meaning behind spiritual truths. You are not a knower of hidden things and spiritual realities. This is because you are not detached from the body and the five external senses. They veil you so that you will not be able to bear with me patiently. That is why the sacred intellect says:

How will you endure a thing patiently when you have not comprehended any awareness of it? (Q18:68)

Thus, you do not have the strength of my companionship and this is the meaning of the sacred intellect saying this. The heart replies:

You will find me, if God wills, one who remains steadfast,

because of the strength of my ability and my firmness in seeking. I am prepared and I am persistent, but only if God wills.

I will not rebel against your command, (Q18:69),

because of the purity of my attentiveness to you and my acceptance of your command and the sincerity of my willpower. Spiritual conversations are all from the "tongue of the moment (spiritual state)." I came to you of my own accord. I accepted you for my own moral healing. Your commands will benefit my own clarity and will prove the sincerity and truthfulness of my willpower. My intention is sincere. The sacred intellect said:

Then, if you follow me, ask me not about anything until I cause to be evoked in you a remembrance of it. (Q18:70)

That is, if you follow me on the journey to the path of perfection, do not question me about anything. This means you must imitate me and submit to the good actions with virtuous manners and struggle in the journey. When the time is right, I will explain some of the hidden, spiritual meanings and truths to you. That is: I will explain it to you when you become detached from your outer physical form and free from both the emotional influences of the heart and the senses.

So they both set out until when they embarked in a vessel.

They embarked upon the ark of the body which had

reached the level of asceticism and had become worthy of "servantness" towards the sacred world upon the sea of matter for the journey to God. That is, the body is now mature enough to perform the religious obligations. The sacred intellect took both the animal soul and the heart and rode in the body. They went with the body to the sacred universe in the endless ocean to proceed towards God. The sacred intellect made a hole in the body, that is, it made the body defective through extra spiritual exercises and lessening of food intake so that the body could not go on its own, could no longer rebel. It was in a weakened state. He caused imperfection in its regular order. The heart said:

Had you made a hole in it in order to drown the people?

The sacred intellect had destroyed it (the ship, body) through asceticism and the reduction of food. It weakened its injunctions and made confusion appear in its order and weakened it. Have you made a hole in it in order to drown the animal and plant souls which are in the sea of matter thus to destroy them? That is: Have you made it defective so as to break and weaken its animal and plant natures in this huge ocean so it will drown? The heart added:

Certainly, you had brought about a dreadful thing! (Q18:71)

This denying of the heart to the sacred intellect consists of the manifestation of the animal soul with its attributes and the inclination of the heart towards them (the attributes). The animal soul has become oppressed from the prohibitions of the benefits in asceticism and the non-contentment with what is due it. This criticism shows that the heart is still inclining towards the body even though the heart is no longer able to fulfill the desires of the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) and it is not content with the rights given to it. The sacred intellect said:

Did I not say that you will never be able to have patience with me? (Q18:72)

This is a spiritual awakening and a sacred drawing forth, to wit, the decision to journey must be stronger than that. This is a spiritual challenge and a discipline showing that one's determination in conduct has to be stronger than that. The heart replied:

Take me not to task for what I forgot and constrain me not with hardship for my affair. (18:73)

This is to ask for forgiveness in the station of the accusing or blaming soul. That is, this is the station of the reproaching soul.

Then, they both set out until when they met a boy.

The boy is the animal soul which appears with its attributes and thus veils the heart. Thus, it is a commander of wrongdoing. Khidr killed it by causing anger and desires and the rest of the attributes to die. This is the animal soul in all its aspects which veils consciousness and becomes the aspect of the soul commanding to wrongdoing (*nafs al-ammarah bil su'*). The sacred intellect

killed (it).

It killed the aspect of the animal soul which commands to evil and veils the heart by overcoming the faculties of avoidance of harm/pain (anger) and of the attraction to pleasure (desires). The heart said:

Have you killed a pure soul without his having slain a soul?

This is fault finding because of the affection of the heart for the animal soul. That is: Have you killed a soul that was innocent? The heart had compassion for the animal soul and all its aspects. It is part of the nature of the heart to have compassion.

Certainly, you had brought about a horrible thing. (Q18:74)

The sacred intellect said:

Did I not say that you will never be able to have patience with me? (18:75)

This is a reminder and a spiritual interpretation. Again, it is a spiritual challenge. The heart said:

If I ask you about anything after this, then do not keep company with me. Surely, you have reached (enough) ***of excusing from my presence.*** (18:76)

This is to ask forgiveness and to confess the wrongdoing by the breaking of a promise and acknowledging it. All of these are variations when the soul is accusing. The heart once again apologizes and confesses to its wrongdoing and failures. The reproaching aspect of soul has many forms. It takes on many colors.

Then, they both set out until when they approached a people of a town,

They are the faculties of the body and the heart and the sacred intellect desiring of food (that is, spiritual nourishment) from the people of the town. This is the seeking of spiritual food from them. In other words, this is the same as taking a universal meaning from a particular comprehension. Certainly they (the bodily faculties) refused them as guests even though they had previously given them food, since their food at this time was from above their heads, from the sacred lights, from the theophany (self-manifestation) of beauty and mercy and divine gnosticism and from hidden meanings and not from below their feet as was the case before the destruction of the ark (body) and the killing of the boy (animal soul) through asceticism. The faculties and the senses prevent this (gathering of spiritual food) instead of helping. Rather, it (the spiritual food) is not ready until they are drowsy and quiet

as Moses said to his household: *Wait here,* (Q28:29), that is, the physical forces of the body, and

they asked its people,

the physical forces,

for food,

spiritual nourishment,

but they refused.

That is, they refused to give them spiritual nourishment or

to receive them as guests.

The sacred intellect and the heart had been given spiritual nourishment from the sacred lights before their manifestation. Spiritual nourishment is a manifestation of Divine Beauty from above, knowledge from above. It cannot be given by the physical forces. Spiritual nourishment comes from the upper Light from where sacred knowledge and spiritual meanings come. This knowledge did not come before the body had been damaged and the animal soul commanding to wrongdoing had been killed through spiritual exercises. Before that time, the physical forces, the senses and feelings, were a veil obstructing the heart and not a supplier of spiritual nourishment. While the body is occupied with doing spiritual exercises, it will cease interfering in the heart's ability to know God. Spiritual nourishment cannot be delivered until these forces are calm and quiet.

Then, they found in it a wall,

that is, the soul at peace (*nafs al-mutma'innah*). The proof of this is that they found the wall after they had killed the animal soul commanding to wrongdoing through spiritual

exercises. The aspect of the animal soul commanding to wrongdoing could not move by its own will. It had become motionless and, because of its weakness, it had nearly died so the state of the aspect of the soul at peace is described as the wall, exhausted,

that is about to tumble down.

This is the tranquil soul (*nafs al-mutma'innah*, i.e. the soul at peace, re-integrated into the spirit with certainty. It (the tranquil soul at peace) is interpreted as the wall because it has become temporal after the killing of the egoistic (selfish) soul (i.e. the animal soul which is the passionate soul which commands).

The death of the egoistic soul was through asceticism. Thus, the tranquil soul at peace became inorganic, without motion through either itself or its will. The extent of its weakness causes it to be easily destroyed. Thus, its spiritual state is explained by its inclination to fall into ruin.

The rebuilding of the wall (*nafs al-mutma'innah*) to stand is to adjust and straighten the wall through the perfection of its interior qualities and its good virtues by means of the Light of the rational soul (the *nafs al-natiqah* or human soul, *nafs al-insaniyyah*) until the virtues stand in place of the vile attributes of the animal soul turned egoistic. So the sacred intellect

repaired it.

It raised it up again through good conduct, behavior and attaining positive traits because of the manifestation of the light of the power of goodness. At that point, positive traits were able to rise above the negative. The heart said:

If you had willed, certainly you would have taken a compensation to yourself for it. (Q18:77)

This is a asking of the heart for immediate reward for doing good, not the animal soul. That is, the seeking of

payment for having obtained virtues and the practicing of asceticism. The heart at this point is exhausted by the spiritual exercises. Because of this, the sacred intellect answered it by saying:

This is the parting between me and between you,

This means that this is the separation of my station and your station, the relinquishing. This is the dispersion between my state and your state. Thus, the repairing of the tranquil soul at peace (*nafs al-mutma'innah*) by asceticism and the annihilation of animal attributes through praiseworthy manners should not for the desire of a reward and payment. If that were so, these would not be virtues and perfections.

Now, virtue is the assuming of the Divine Names and Qualities as one's own in a way that the purposed action itself proceeds from the possessor, not from a motive (i.e. payment and reward). That which is done for a motive is a veil and worthless, not a virtue. The sought after is to throw off the veil, to unveil the coverings of the attributes of the animal soul and to go forth into the world of light in order to encounter the hidden meanings. The assuming of the Divine Names and Qualities as one's own is proven to be a reality through God after annihilation in Him, not for a reward as you may have thought. The sacred intellect (intuition/inspiration) said:

I will tell you the interpretation of what you were not able to have patience for. (Q18:78)

Now that the tranquil soul is at peace and the physical forces have lost their strength, the heart is in a receptive state. It became possible for the heart to accept the meanings and to encounter the hidden which the sacred intellect had forbidden the heart from questioning until the sacred intellect mentioned it to the heart. It is prepared to receive knowledge of what it had earlier not been prepared to receive. The interpretation could only be explained when the heart is ready to accept meanings and inner knowledge.

Now the sacred intellect will mention the spiritual interpretation to the heart in order to make it aware of the "meaning" of these things. The sacred intellect is of the view that the heart has been "prepared" and is ready to understand the spiritual meanings and sacred knowledge.

As for the vessel, it had been of some needy (people) ***who toiled in the sea,***

that is, of the sea of matter, that is, the physical forces which work for a living in the endless ocean of God. They are expressed by the outer senses and the natural plant forces. They are called "needy" because they are always silent and always attached to the body. They are weak and cannot oppose the heart and decide to go their own way dominating over the heart like other animal forces are capable of doing. They are similar to the limbs of the body and not like the faculties of the avoidance of harm/pain (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*) and the attraction to pleasure (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*), the latter of which has a rebellious animal nature. It is said that the needy people were ten brothers. Five lived in time and five in the space of the endless ocean of the body. This indicates the inner and outer senses. They are weakened by spiritual exercises.

I wanted to mar it as there had been a king after them taking every vessel forcefully. (Q18:79)

That is, I wanted to mar it through asceticism so that the king, the selfish, egoistic animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah bi'l su'*) would not take the vessel containing the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) through force. He was a king who was ahead of them. He was seizing every vessel by brutal force through the predominance upon that vessel in order to control its animal soul and the using of that for his own desires and purposes. The vessel (body) containing the animal soul was made defective so the king could not use the body for his own lust and pleasure.

As for the boy, both his parents,

who are spirit and corporeal nature, the spirit and the body,

had been ones who believe,

were believers, confirming unity by their fidelity in the course of obeying God and submitting to His command. They believe in that which God willed for them. They were present whenever His call came

and we dreaded that he should constrain them with defiance and ingratitude, (Q18:80)

and become a burden on them showing soulishness, ingratitude and disobedience to the spirit and the heart and not recognizing the good things they had done, thereby veiling them. The sacred intellect said: We were afraid that the aspect of the soul commanding to evil would spoil the faith of the spirit and heart and nullify the benefits of their worship. The spirit and heart are created to do as God says.

So,

the replacement for them for the boy (animal soul, *nafs al-ammarah bi'l su'*) was the tranquil soul at peace (*nafs al-mutma'innah*) which is more sincere, purer, more merciful, more compassionate. The spirit and heart have more compassion towards the tranquil soul at peace and the body. They are more useful to them.

As for the wall, it had been that of two orphan boys,

means the faculty of knowers: theoretical and practical reason or wisdom (*hikmat al-nazari* and *hikmat al-'amali*), who are separated from their father who is either the Transcendent Spirit—because of them being veiled from Him by means of bodily coverings—or the heart—which may die or be killed before perfection through the animal soul in the city of the body. Theoretical and practical wisdom

were not connected to the Transcendent Spirit because of the influence and interference of the physical body. The body separated these two types of wisdom from their connection to the Transcendent Spirit

in the city,

that is, of the body, and

beneath it had been a treasure for them.

That is, and beneath the tranquil soul at peace (wall) there was a treasure which is gnosis (*ma'rifah*) which can only be reached in the station of the heart which does not appear except through those two knowers of theoretical and practical wisdom in the station of the heart. That is the state of reaching full strength and the bringing forth of that treasure. It is the place of the gathering of all of the universals and particulars through the active agent at the time of perfection. It is possible for the macrocosm and the microcosm to exist at the same time, at the time of perfection. That is the state of nearing higher realms, attaining what is most important. This is the time to extract the treasure. Some of the commentators of the outer meaning have said that the treasure was some scrolls that described who their parents were.

The father of both of them had been one in accord with morality so your Lord wanted they be fully grown having come of age and pull out their treasure as a mercy from your Lord.

We replaced the egoistic soul of the king with the tranquil soul at peace which is more pure. It is good and nearer in tenderness in mercy and compassion because the tranquil soul at peace is more favorably inclined towards the spirit and the body than the egotistical, animal soul and more beneficial for them. It brings them greater happiness.

Reference to their grandfathers is a metaphor for the

spirit and the heart, being nearer to compassion, more related to them and more merciful.

It is said there was a higher father for them, that is, the Transcendent Spirit which is higher than the heart and God retained them for him. Thus in this way he is none other than the Transcendent Spirit.

I accomplished that not of my own command. This is the interpretation of what you were not able to have patience for. (Q18:82).

Part 3
An Analysis Based on Quranic Psychology[1]
Introduction

The dream vision of the Quranic meeting of Moses, before he was given prophethood, and "someone more knowledgeable than he,"[2] is one of the many unique passages of the Quran. It begins as a narration (Q18:60-64) and then becomes an "ascent upwards" or an anagoge of the spiritual journey of an aspect of the soul. (Q18:65-82)

As a narration, it tells the story of Moses, who symbolizes the conscious soul (*nafs al-mulhamah, qalb*) and his servant, who symbolizes the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*).

As an anagoge it tells of the "ascent upwards" of the conscious soul when it meets the "sacred intellect" symbolized by "one more knowledgeable than the conscious soul," Khidr.

The soul (*nafs,* feminine noun) has various meanings associated with it. It is like God saying:

> *Ask the people* (soul) *of the town* ... (Q12:82)
>
> In other words, when the word *nafs* is used non-reflexively in the Quran, it refers to a general concept called "soul," that, like a town, has many different characteristics but is one single substance. By the word *nafs* (soul), what is meant is what is within us and that which is created with our body.[3]

Throughout this journey, we will meet the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*), the inspired or conscious soul/heart (*nafs al-mulhamah, qalb*), the conscience (*nafs al-lawwamah, fu'ad*), and, finally, the tranquil soul at peace (*nafs al-mutma'innah, 'aql*).

Nafs al-Mulhamah: The Conscious or Inspired Soul

As noted above, one of the manifestations of the "soul"

is as the conscious soul (*nafs al-mulhamah*) or "heart" (*qalb*).[4] According to well-known Muslim scholars, the conscious soul (*nafs al-mulhamah*) is the "heart" (*qalb*), which is symbolized by Moses in this dream vision. It is described by a traditional scholar in the following way:

> Imam al-Raghib in his *Mufradat* says that *qalb* literally means to turn something around on its face, or to flip something over, such as the turning over of a cloth, or the turning of a person when they turn away from the direction they were going into another direction. Hence, its derivatives all express some form of action....
>
> Then, al-Raghib says that this term is applied to the human heart (physically as well). It is said that this is because of its frequent turning over, or going through what we call 'changes of heart' or consciousness, where emotions, decisions and opinions often flip and switch.
>
> The *qalb* is consciousness that can either be sick or sound, dead or alive, due to the beliefs and certainty inside it.[5]

Throughout its development, the conscious soul (*nafs al-mulhamah, qalb*), an aspect of the cognitive system, fluctuates between behaving immorally or with God-consciousness (*taqwa*). In other words, it is inspired to be conscious of its actions or behavior. (Q91:8)

... *and, then, inspired* (the conscious soul) *to act immorally* (or with) *God-consciousness.* (Q91:8)

The Three Stages of the Soul

The conscious soul moves through three stages.

First it is created in potential with the body. This stage is called soul-body and refers to the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) that comes into existence with the birth of an infant. The animal soul governs the body through the motivational system. It is part of the world of multiplicity or creation.

That is God, your Lord. There is no god but He—the One Who is Creator of everything ... (Q6:102)

The conscious soul is born with the body with the potential to intensify its existence and subsist in the eternal, spiritual world. The conscious soul gradually moves from the weak existence it shares with the body to a more intense existence.

The body, on the other hand, is created from physical nature which causes it to be the furthest distance from the eternal, spiritual world because of its physicality.

The second stage of the conscious soul begins when the infant reaches maturity, when it has intensified its existence by gradually detaching itself from the body. At this point, it actualizes or "gives birth" to the conscious soul (*nafs al-mulhamah, qalb*). It has moved from potentiality in the motivational system of the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) to strengthening its actuality in the cognitive system or human, rational soul (*nafs al-natiqah*) with the aid of conscience (*nafs al-lawwamah, fu'ad*) as it evolves from animal to human.

Strengthening itself begins by knowing itself. Once the conscious soul becomes a subject with knowledge and awareness of "self," it engages in the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*) to purify the ego, that aspect of itself that incites to wrongdoing (*nafs al-ammarah bi'l su'*).

In the third stage, the conscious soul, still occupied with the greater struggle, joins with the spirit/intellect (*ruh/'aql,* masculine nouns). There it has the potential of attaining the highest level of "humanness" through the process of *kashf* or "purification of consciousness."

The Three Levels of the Greater Struggle

There are three levels of the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*) in which the conscious soul engages: God-con-

sciousness (*taqwa*), steadfastness (*istiqamah*) and purification of consciousness (*kashf*).

This journey begins, then, by giving birth to consciousness, that is, "knowing self," and, then, as a "knowing subject," undertaking the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*) in purifying the animal soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs al-ammarah bi' su'*) during its movement from the animal to the human soul, from motivation to cognition.

It first attains God-consciousness (*taqwa*) by recognizing God as the Creator and Protector. At the second level it exhibits steadfastness (*istiqamah*) in its actions. The third level of the greater struggle (*kashf*) is the first phase of the purification of itself (*kashf*).

The Three Phases of the Purification of Consciousness

As "knowing subject," having become conscious, the conscious soul then moves, motivated by its free will (*ikhtiyar*), towards its goal of the completion or perfection of purification of "self" (*kashf*).

This occurs in three phases: First, being present with reason (*muhadara*); second, leaving reason aside to allow intuition to enter into consciousness (*mukashafa*); and, third, no longer open to free willpower (*ikhtiyar*), but requiring "preparation" or "inner receptivity,"[6] and God's will or gift, the direct vision (*mushahida*) of "knowledge that proceeds from the Presence of God" or *'ilm laduni*.

In other words, knowing "self" and having willingly and consciously successfully engaged in each of the three levels of the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*), the conscious soul now purifies itself (*tazkiyat al-qalb*) through the first two phases of *kashf* or purification of consciousness. The conscious soul is then "prepared" to receive "direct vision," if God wills.

The Three Encounters

Each of the three stages of the soul, levels of the greater struggle and phases of purification (*kashf*) relate to each of the three encounters of the "knowing subject" in what has now evolved into an anagoge or "ascent upwards."

The first encounter is with a vessel which the sacred intellect damages. The vessel symbolizes the stage of the soul-body regulated by the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*). The sacred intellect incapacitates it in order to avoid it ability to incite to wrongdoing, symbolized by an egoistic king who is ahead of the vessel "*taking every vessel forcefully.* (Q18:79) The conscious soul and the sacred intellect are both "present" (*muhadara*) in the "vessel."

The encounter shows the use of reason in deciding between the lesser of two evils, that is between the animal soul and its aspect that incites wrongdoing (*bi'l su'*). It is to teach the importance of reacting with the protection provided by God-consciousness (*taqwa*) when confronted by the possibility of being controlled by the animal soul that incites to evil (the "ego" or king).

The second encounter is when the sacred intellect "kills" a boy who symbolizes the animal soul that incites to wrongdoing (*nafs al-ammarah bi'l su'*). Here the conscious soul is moving from the animal to the human soul. It indicates the level of the greater struggle of "steadfastness" as it is here that the conscious soul must move away from reason and let intuition enter, using right judgment in "killing" the animal soul that is inciting to wrongdoing.

Recalling that the story here involves an "ascent upwards," it is the second stage of the soul-body's movement of the conscious soul away from the ego (*nafs al-ammarah bi'l su'*) towards the human soul (*nafs al-natiqah*, "speaking soul," or *nafs al-insaniyyah*). It evolves from animal to human in a naturally programmed way moving towards completion or perfection.

Having tried to avoid the ego in the first encounter, the sacred intellect finds that the ego is still active in the second encounter, but now instead of a "king" who was not present, the encounter is symbolized by a "boy" who is.

Understanding the situation through intuition as a symbolic one, the "killing" of the animal soul that incites to wrongdoing or ego (*nafs al-ammarah bi'l su'*) is an example of the maintaining of *istiqamah* or steadfastness and using right judgment against it, no matter how difficult a struggle it may be.

The third encounter is with a wall that is about to fall down. The wall symbolizes the state of soul-spirit/intellect or the *nafs al-mutma'innah*, the tranquil soul at peace. It is the third level of the greater struggle known as *kashf* or purification of consciousness. This is also the first phase of *kashf* where the conscious soul is preparing itself to receive "direct vision," if God wills (*mushahida*).

The third encounter is that of the rebuilding of a "wall" that was about to fall down. This symbolizes the tranquil soul at peace (*nafs al-mutma'innah*). It has been weakened by the greater struggle and, then, strengthened, if God wills, by the direct vision (*mushahida*) of the lights, illuminations and lightning flashes to a purified consciousness (*tazkiyat al-qalb*). If successful in its purification, it is able to cross the barrier into the salty sea of intuition in complete submission to the will of God.

It is through the three phases of purifying consciousness (*kashf*) that the conscious soul (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*) is then prepared" to receive knowledge from His Presence (*'ilm laduni*) or gnosis (*irfan*) of intuitive experience knowledge *ma'rifat*), if God wills.

We will now explore each of the three stages in detail.

Stage 1 of the Soul: Soul-Body
The *Nafs al-Ammarah* or Animal Soul

Mention when Moses says to his servant, (Q18:60), that is, the animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*).

Nature has provided the animal soul with motion/motivation to respond to involuntary and voluntary impulses to move towards pleasure (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) and away from pain (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*), to exercise irrational (*iradah*) or rational free willpower (*ikhtiyar,* this word stemming from *khayr* or "good") so that there is free willpower to choose the good or not, in addition to the sensate and perceptive systems of the five external and internal senses. The animal soul (*nafs al-ammarah*) is born when an infant leaves the uterus.

As the child grows into maturity, the animal soul, imbued with motion/motivation by nature, acts as the "persuader."

> The "persuader" has two sub-divisions so it either motivates a person to attain some pleasure (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*) or it motivates a persons to avoid some harm/pain (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*). Persuading the (conscious) soul to being attracted to some pleasure is known as lust or concupiscence (*quwwat al-shahwaniyyah*). This power persuades or induces the movement of the organs and limbs to move towards what is imagined to be pleasurable or necessary or useful for subsistence. The attraction to some pleasure—whether it be towards something needed to preserve the species or society—such as food or sex—is also known in Quranic terms as "commanding to good" (*amr bil ma'ruf*).
>
> Persuading the soul to move by avoiding some harm/pain is known as anger or irascibility (*quwwat al-ghadabiyyah*). This power persuades or induces the movement of the organs or limbs to move away from or overcome what is imagined to be harmful or destructive

in preserving the subsistence of the individual self. It is known in Quranic terms as "prohibiting what is wrong" (*nahy an al-munkar*).[7]

As long as the conscious soul is attached to these instinctive motivations, it remains an "animal," as these are the qualities humans share with them.

Stage 2 of the Soul: Soul Evolving From Animal to Human
The *Nafs al-Mulhamah* (Consciousness) and *Nafs al-Lawwamah* (Conscience)

The second stage of the soul's journey begins when the potential conscious soul moves towards actualization and maturity. Due to motion in the substances of body and soul, soul-body is in a state of constant change, never the same for any two instants. It is because of this substantial motion that the conscious soul is able to gradually detach itself from the body and evolve towards the spirit. This second stage is called "the soul evolving from animal to human" and it is this stage where it intensifies its existence and, thereby, develops its moral character through the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*).

The conscious soul moves from the motivational system of the animal soul to the cognitive system of the human soul or soul-spirit/intellect (*nafs al-mutma'innah*, *'aql*), of which it is a part. The cognitive system also includes the mind (*sadr*), conscience (*nafs al-lawwamah, fu'ad*) and spirit/intellect (*'aql, nafs al-mutma'innah*).

It is the mind (*sadr*) that receives the impulses from the animal soul, impulses to preserve the species (concupiscence, lust, attraction to pleasure, emotions, *shahwah*) and impulses to preserve one's individuality (irascibility, anger, avoidance of harm/pain, behavior, *ghadab*). It works through reason when held in moderation or balance to discipline these impulses. When out of balance, the impulses become either too much, too little or completely lacking in the power to preserve the human species or to preserve the self as an individual.

Whereas the motivational system is part of the world of creation, the cognitive system is from the world of command. We will encounter the other aspects of our cognitive system as the narration and anagoge unfold. The cognitive system comes into existence when God breathes the command: *Be!* It is referred to as the world of unity and it stabilizes the world of creation which depends upon it. The world of command (*'alam al-amr*) is eternal, as is the spiritual world, also known as the intelligible world.

Say: ... Who manages the command? They will, then, say: God! Say: Will you not be God-conscious (muttaqin)*?* (Q10:31)

The conscious soul in this narration indicates willingness to undertake the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*), when it states that it will struggle for as long as it takes to reach the place of the meeting of the two seas:

I will not quit until I reach the place of the meeting between the two seas, even though I go on for many years. (Q18:60)

Yet, the conscious soul fails to recognize *the place of the meeting of the two seas* the first time it passed it because it is unconscious and not aware of its own existence. As the Prophet said: He who knows himself, knows his Lord.

Know the "Self"

The process for the conscious soul to know itself begins when it questions itself: I know I am alive, but what does this mean? What am I? How can I come to *know* what I am?

As al-Ghazzali was to write many centuries later:

> Know that the key to knowledge of one's self is knowledge of one's Lord. That is why it has been said: One who knows one's own 'self,' knows one's Lord. In short, nothing is closer to you than you. If you do not

know your self, how will you know others? Moreover, you may think that you know your 'self' and be mistaken, for this kind of knowing is not the key to the knowledge of the Real. The beasts know this much—since of your self, you know no more than the outward head, face, hands, feet, flesh, and skin. Of the inward dimension you know that when you are hungry, you eat bread, and when you are angry, you fall on another person, and when attraction to pleasure (lust) dominates, you make for the marriage act. All the beasts know that much.

Therefore, you must seek your own reality. What thing are you? From where have you come? Where will you go? For what work have you come to this dwelling place? Why were you created? What and where is your happiness? What and from where lies your misery?

If you want to know your self, you should know that when you were created, two things were created: one is this outward frame, which is called the body. It can be seen with the outward eye. The second is the inward substance ... that can only be recognized through inward insight, but cannot be seen with the outward eye. Your reality is what is inward. Everything else follows upon it.[8]

In order to answer these and similar questions, the conscious soul has to pass through the realms of soul-body with the potentiality to "find" (*wujud*) and gradually actualize consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah,* heart) in its evolution from animal to human—and, finally, be conscious of transforming into soul-spirit/intellect (*nafs al-mutma'innah, 'aql*) through the process known as *kashf* (purifying consciousness).

The conscious soul at maturity begins to gradually detach itself from its weak existence with the body through substantial motion provided to it by nature. As it detaches itself from the body, in its natural yearning to complete itself in the spirit/intellect and attain eternal life, it develops its potential for a more intense existence. It continues to gradually evolve. That is, it evolves from animal to poten-

tially human. When the conscious soul actualizes its human potential, it joins with the spirit/intellect as soul-spirit/intellect.

Throughout this process, the conscious soul engages in the greater, spiritual struggle that began by knowing "self."

> To know oneself is to know the everlasting reality that is consciousness, and to know it is to be it.[9]

That is, once the conscious soul knows of the existence of "self," it has perfected its potentiality as a "knowing subject."

> In other words, through being fully conscious of its own reality, such a (conscious) soul has becomes fully conscious of what God created it to be.[10]

The Greater Struggle

Having become aware and found the Presence of God in knowing its *existence* and its relation to all that exists, the conscious soul, accompanied by the animal soul, first misses the meeting place of the two seas.

But when they reached the place of the meeting between them, then, they forgot their great fish and it took itself a way through the sea, burrowing. (Q18:61)

This is because the conscious soul, now a "knowing subject" is still not "prepared" for the meeting. Preparation requires the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*) once one is present as a "knowing subject."

> The greater struggle is analogous to a kind of tug-of-war between soul-body (ego) and soul-spirit/intellect to win the attentiveness of consciousness....[11]

Undertaking the greater struggle reflects the Quranic view that the Prophet was sent to take humans from the

shadows of unconsciousness (the motivational system of the soul-body) to the light of consciousness (the cognitive system of the soul-spirit/intellect). He taught the seeking of spiritual nourishment.

Spiritual Nourishment

Then, when they crossed, he said to his servant: Give us our break-fast. Certainly we met fatigue from our journey. (Q18:62)

The conscious soul had commanded the animal soul to carry the spiritual nourishment (the great fish), the sacred intellect, with them and to care for it at the time it established the firm intention to undertake the greater spiritual struggle.

The conscious soul, then, awakens and realizes that it is hungry for spiritual nourishment because of the fatigue it suffered in giving birth to itself now that it is a "knowing subject."

The *Nafs al-Lawwamah, Fu'ad* or Conscience

He said: Consider this! When we took shelter at the rock, truly, I forgot the great fish. None but Satan caused me to forget to remember it. (Q18:63)

While the conscious soul was unaware, the animal soul ‹e servant) realized that it had forgotten the spiritual nour- ‹ment (the sacred intellect). It had succumbed to the sug- ‹tion that it should lose hope in ever finding the meeting ‹e of the two seas. As a result, the animal soul forgot to ‹member it. The conscience (*nafs al-lawwamah, fu'ad*) or the ›laming soul is that which perceived the situation.

It is important to note that there is a difference between conscience (*nafs al-lawwamah, fu'ad*) and consciousness (*nafs al-mulhamah, qalb*). God uses *fu'ad* and *qalb* in one sentence, making it clear that they are in reference to two

separate aspects of self and that *fu'ad* refers to "conscience" and *qalb* refers to "consciousness."

It came to be in the morning that the conscience (fu'ad) *of the mother of Moses was anxious. Truly, she was about to show him, if We had not invigorated her consciousness* (qalb). (Q28:10)

In addition, consciousness has knowledge of reality whereas the conscience perceives reality.

> In other words, conscience benefits from perception, whereas consciousness receives knowledge. However, as long as the conscience does not perceive, consciousness cannot benefit from knowledge. Conscience is the abode of passing or stray thoughts as well.[12]

Consciousness is aware of "self" while the conscience relates to morality and the sense of right and wrong as the case in this story indicates. Later in the story we will see how the conscious soul responds to "the one more knowledgeable than it," that is, the sacred intellect, when the conscious soul is spiritually challenged by the sacred intellect for its interference and comments, which is other than to bear patiently with the sacred intellect. The conscious soul responds from conscience to reproach itself for having questioned the acts of the sacred intellect. This is symbolized as the appearance of the reproachful soul (*nafs al-lawwamah, fu'ad*) or conscience, but this time it appears to the conscious soul.

The conscience perceives and, therefore, falls into a state of restlessness or unease, troubled, disturbed, anxious, empty or blank from fear. It has no need of being invigorated or reassured or strengthened or given courage as consciousness does, in some cases, but requires instead supportive help through God's guidance.

It took to itself to a way into the sea in a wondrous way. (Q18:63)

Mysteriously, the spiritual nourishment had come back to life and took its way into the sea of the body, living as it had been at first, burrowing, digging a large hole under the barrier to escape from the sweet sea of reason. This indicates the presence of the sacred intellect as it makes its way into its home in the salty sea of intuition.

Level 1 of the Greater Struggle
Attaining God-consciousness (*taqwa*)

Once the conscious soul awakens, it recognizes that the place where its spiritual nourishment (great fish) had returned to the sea is what the conscious soul had been looking for.

> *That is what we had been looking for!* (Q18:64)

It was the place where it had been promised a meeting at the junction of the two seas with "someone more knowledgeable than it," for, as the Quran says:

> *... above every possessor of knowledge is The Knower.* (Q12:76)

With the first level of the greater struggle, the conscious soul "prepares" itself through its use of reason to attain God-consciousness (*taqwa*) by purifying the animal soul (*tazkiyat nafs*):

> The word *taqwa* in the Quran, translated as God-consciousness, literally means to protect and guard oneself against danger. In the Tradition, it refers to protecting the soul from what afflicts it. ... *Taqwa* means having the majestic presence of God in one's consciousness by which to protect oneself against everything false, evil and ugly. In this sense, the conceptual meanings of reason/intellect *'aql* and God-consciousness, *taqwa,* converge: they both refer to our conscious effort to protect ourselves against the inhuman and immoral con-

sequences of wrongdoing, injustice and oppression.[13]

Thus, the conscious soul has attains God-consciousness (*taqwa*). This principle underlies the rational basis of choosing goodness over wrongdoing and positive over negative traits.

> As God-conscious "*muttaqin,*" we have habituated our free willpower (*ikhtiyar*) so that it follows our consciousness (*qalb, nafs al-mulhamah*), listens to our conscience (*fu'ad, nafs al-lawwamah*), or inner critic, resulting in the manifestation of the spirit/light of intuitive experience knowledge (*ma'rifat*), knowledge we gain through actual experience.[14]

Innate Nature

Realizing that the place where they lost the spiritual nourishment was what they had been looking for, the inspired and animal soul

went back following their footsteps. (Q18:64)

That is, they returned to their innate nature (*fitrat Allah*) following the Quranic sign/verse:

Set your face towards the way of life (din) *of a monotheist* (hanifan). *It is the nature originated by God* (fitrat Allah) *in which He originated humanity. There is no substituting the creation of God. That is the truth-loving way of life, except most of humanity knows not.* (Q30:30)

Innate nature was created by God when He breathed His spirit within the first human being (Adam). It resulted in the natural disposition of consciousness (*nafs al-mulhamah, qalb*) and the belief in monotheism or the existence of One God. When the conscious soul is conscious of this disposition, it is able to turn away from all that is false. It is protected from

going astray and following the desires of the animal soul and subjecting it to its whims and passions.

The nature originated by God in which He originated humanity ... (Q30:30) links all of humanity. All of humanity comes from God and returns to God.

There is no substitution for the creation of God, (Q30:30), that is, we cannot substitute our desires and passions for our innate nature by which we were originated. We either have to maintain our *fitrat Allah* or change our self, in a sense, return to it, if we have strayed from it.

> According to (Q30:30), human beings are born with an innate inclination to *tawhid* (Oneness of God), which is encapsulated in our *fitrat* along with compassion, intelligence, altruism (*ihsan*) and all other attributes that embody what it is to be a human who consciously submits to the will of God (muslim).[15]

Fitrat informs our conscience (*fu'ad*, *nafs al-lawwamah*) as well. Our *fitrat Allah* or natural inclination/disposition that God created within each human being as a member of humanity is the source of all the possibilities of the evolving of the conscious soul.

> *Fitrat* is the pattern according to which God has created humanity. It is God's manner of creating, *sunnat Allah*, and each person fits each into its pattern created for it and set in its proper place. It is the Law of God. Submission to it brings harmony, for it means realization of what is inherent in one's true nature; opposition to it brings discord, for it means realization of what is extraneous to one's true nature.... it is justice as opposed to injustice.... submission means conscious, willing submission and this submission does not entail loss of 'freedom' for the human being, since freedom, in fact, means *to act as one's true nature demands*.... Submission

> refers to conscious and willing submission for were it neither conscious nor willing it cannot then mean real submission.... Neither by submission is meant the kind that is momentary or erratic, for real submission is a continuous act lived throughout the entire span of one's life; nor is it the kind that operates only within the realm of consciousness (*qalb*, *nafs al-mulhamah*) without manifesting itself outwardly in the action of the body as works performed in obedience to God's Law. Submission to God's will means also obedience to His law.[16]

Level 2 of the Greater Struggle
Attaining Steadfastness (*istiqamah*)

Then, they found a servant among Our servants to whom We gave mercy from Us and We taught him knowledge that proceeds from Our Presence. (Q18:65)

With this sign/verse (Q18:65), the anagoge begins when we learn of *'ilm laduni*, that is, literally: *Knowledge from Our side.*

The several Quranic signs/verses or references to *laduni* speak of *that proceeds from the Presence of God* without mentioning knowledge *that proceeds from the Presence of God* making this anagoge even more unique.

We taught him knowledge that proceeds from Our Presence ('ilm min ladunna). (Q18:65)

For Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, it is the Torah.

Thus We relate to you (Moses) *some tiding of what preceded. Surely We gave you from that which proceeds from Our Presence a Remembrance.* (Q20:99)

For Prophet Zachariah, peace be upon him, it is a "protector."

Truly, I (Zachariah) *feared for my defenders after me. My woman has been a barren woman. So bestow on me from that which proceeds from Your Presence a protector.* (Q19:5)

For Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him, it is "continuous mercy."

Our continuous mercy from that which proceeds from Our Presence and purity and he (Yahya) *had been mindful.* (Q19:13)

For Prophet Muhammad, peace and the mercy of God be upon him, it is the Quran as perhaps "the helping authority" he asks for and a sublime compensation to those who lay down their lives and abandon their abodes when prescribed by God.

Then, We would have given them from that which proceeds from Our Presence a sublime compensation. (Q4:67)

A Book, the signs in it were set clear. Again, they were explained distinctly from that which proceeds from the Presence of the Wise, Aware. (Q11:1)

Truly, you, you are in receipt of the Quran, that which proceeds from the Presence, Wise, Knowing. (Q27:6)

Say (Muhammad)*: My Lord! Cause me to enter a gate in ncerity. Bring me out as one who is brought out in sincerity. As- n me from that which proceeds from Your Presence a helping ıthority.* (Q17:80)

To teach *'ilm laduni* is to teach the meaning of things without any physical matter because to know something is to grasp its meaning.

> The meaning of something we know comes from our cognitive experiences. The fact that the conscious soul is able to evolve from the potential to the actuality of soul-

spirit/intellect—also known as "meaning"—is to develop our moral/spiritual aspects.[17]

Right Judgment

Moses said to him: May I follow you so that you will teach me something of what you were taught of right judgment? (Q18:66)

The conscious soul is asking to learn right judgment which means continuing in the way of Truth or the right way with self-constraining firmness and having morally correct behavior or thinking, maturity of intellect, good management of affairs and the freedom to decide what should be done in a particular situation.

There is no compulsion in the way of life. Surely, right judgment became clear from error. (Q2:256)

Certainly, We gave Abraham his right judgment before. (Q21:51)

It guides to the right judgment, so we believed in it. (Q72:2)

Awareness

He said: Truly, you will never be able to have patience with me How will you endure a thing patiently when you have not comprehended any awareness of it? (Q18:67-68)

The sacred intellect is implying that the conscious soul will not have patience with what it does because it has not understood what patience is.

Patience

The Quran emphasizes the important of patience in several signs/verses, as for example:

So have thou patience with a graceful patience. (Q70:5)

It often relates patience with ones who remain steadfast:

Have patience. Truly, God is with the ones who remain steadfast. (Q8:46)

Ones Who Remain Steadfast

Once the conscious soul reaches the second phase, however, it gains intuitive proof of being steadfast. It implies: I am prepared and I am persistent:

He said: You will find me, if God wills, one who remains steadfast ... (Q18:69)

Steadfastness (*istiqamah*) is to be loyal, faithful, committed, dependable, reliable, dutifully firm and unwavering. The conscious soul mentions, *if God wills*, indicating that he has attained God-consciousness (*taqwa*).

God is with the ones who remain steadfast. (Q2:249)

It is to remain steadfast in trials and tribulations and even at the time of danger:

We will, certainly, try you with something of fear and hunger and diminution of wealth and lives and fruits, and give good tidings to the ones who remain steadfast. (Q2:155)

Virtuous conduct ... and the ones who live up to their compact when they made a contract, and the ones who remain steadfast in desolation and tribulation and at the time of danger, those are those who were sincere and those, they are the ones who are God-conscious! (Q2:177)

Steadfastness is paired with patience and God-consciousness:

O those who believed! Excel in patience and be steadfast. Be God-conscious so that perhaps you will prosper. (Q3:200)

It is paired with patience alone, as well.

O those who believed! Pray for help with patience and formal prayer. Truly, God is with the ones who remain steadfast. (Q2:153)

Prophet Ishmael, peace be upon him, remained steadfast even after his father, Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, told him that he had had a dream to sacrifice him:

He said: O my father! Accomplish whatever you are commanded. You will find me, if God willed, of the ones who remain steadfast. (Q37:102)

Level 3 of the Greater Struggle
Purity of Consciousness (*kashf*)

The conscious soul continues trying to convince the sacred intellect that it is prepared to journey with it.

... and I will not rebel against your command. (Q18:69)

> because I came to you of my own accord. I accepted you for my own moral healing. Your commands will benefit my own clarity and will prove the sincerity and truthfulness of my will. My intention is sincere.[18]

The sacred intellect then says:

Then, if you follow me, ask me not about anything until I cause to be evoked in you a remembrance of it. (Q18:70)

The sacred intellect, speaking from knowledge directly from God, cautions the conscious soul:

> Do not use reason to seek realities and meaning until I myself say to you and until I give news to you of the hidden realities from the exchange between the body and consciousness at the time of your solitude. You must follow all the steps that I take. That is, you must follow my example, walk with determination and pursue the way with the performance of spiritual exercises to attain the best conduct and to struggle against your desires. Do not ask for any reasonable explanations of the inner truth. That is: I will explain it to you when you become detached from your outer physical form and free from both the emotional influences of consciousness and the senses.[19]

When morally healed, the conscious soul knows and acts as a monotheist through the light of unity (*nur al-tawhid*). The conscious soul transforms into the spirit, intellect or "kernel" (*ruh, 'aql, lubb*). Transforming the *nafs al-mulhamah*, or conscious soul (feminine noun), into the spirit, *ruh* (masculine noun), is a process that takes place within itself depending on how it engages with the soul-spirit/intellect or *'aql*, also known in Quranic terms as reason and *ruh*, spirit by God's command or *amr*.

The sacred intellect with each instance that the conscious soul questions it, adds further spiritual exercises for the conscious soul to engage in such as learning patience as we have seen.

Barrier

On its way to purification, the inspired or conscious soul first faces the barrier or *barzakh* between the two seas, one sweet and the other, salty, between reason and intuition. It has to leave reason behind in order to cross over, but as we will see with the three encounters that the sacred intellect shows it, it is not able to do so while the sacred intellect has

done so and that is why it is able to *take its way into the sea, burrowing.* (Q18:61)

The word, sea, *bahr* in Arabic, means both sweet, fresh water and salty seawater. The place of the meeting (*majma'*) or junction is known as the *barzakh* or barrier where the two seas meet. This barrier is often referred to as the "junction" between the body and the spirit, or the *barzakh* between reason and intuition at the station of consciousness where the conscious soul fluctuates between doubt (reason) and certainty (intuition).[20]

In other words, at the meeting of the two seas, that is, two "seas" of knowledge, it is reason that can lead to doubt and intuition that can lead to certainty. Reason is the sweet sea because of its directionality and limitedness while intuition is the mysterious, unfathomable deep salty sea.

At the same time, the barrier is considered to be a sacred place, a place of respect and reverence because it stands between the two kinds of knowledge, intuition and reason, both from the eternal world of command at the station of consciousness (*nafs al-mulhamah*, *qalb*).

The Sweet Sea of Reason

The Quran speaks highly of reason in understanding the physical world. Being reasonable (exercising our power of reason), that is, being immersed in the sweet sea, is to recognize the signs of God:

... the alternation of the nighttime and the daytime and what God caused to descend from the heaven of provision. He gave life with it to the earth after its death and the diversifying of the winds—signs for a folk who are reasonable. (Q45:5)

He caused to be subservient to you the nighttime and the daytime and the sun and the moon, and the stars, ones caused to be subservient by His command. Truly, in that are signs for a folk who are reasonable. (Q16:12)

Certainly, We left in it a sign, clear portents for a folk who be reasonable. (Q29:35)

If you had asked them: Who sent down water from heaven and gave life by it to the earth after its death, certainly, they would say: God! Say: The Praise belongs to God! Nay! Most of them are not reasonable. (Q29:63)

Among His signs are that He causes you to see the lightning in fear and in hope. He sends water down from heaven and gives life by it to the earth after its death. Truly, in that are, certainly, signs for a folk who are reasonable. (Q30:24)

Thus, God makes manifest His signs to you so that perhaps you will be reasonable. (Q2:242)

Know you that God gives life to the earth after its death. Surely, We made manifest the signs to you so that perhaps you will be reasonable. (Q57:17)

However, reason has its limitations in that some things cannot be perceived through human reasoning. Reason is a tool of the mind (*sadr*) as both are a criterion, a balance between true and false, but when not held in moderation, it can be the source of many illusions and doubts.

> Reason is a cognitive element with many shortcomings when it tries to deal with that which is beyond our own being and our human perception.[21]

Reason only takes one to the first level, but when the goal is to reach purity of consciousness (*kashf*), reason is barred from the spiritual world. There is a barrier between the natural world—which reason deals with—and the spiritual world—which intuition deals with. The spiritual world can only be accessed through intuition. As a result, what was a

narration now becomes an anagoge, that is, a mystical or spiritual interpretation of statements or events.

This anagoge is based on a dream vision. The behavior and acts undertaken by the sacred intellect do not take place as actions or fact, but in a dream vision state so these actions are not to be taken literally by using the sweet sea of reason of the natural world to understand it. This anagoge is to teach the conscious soul how to prepare itself to enter the salty sea, the spiritual-intuitive world, if God wills.

The conscious soul reacted in the dream vision literally, through its use of the sweet sea of reason, while the sacred intellect is trying to introduce it to the inner spiritual world and to prepare its intuition for prophethood through a dream vision.

In the same way that it was important to distinguish between consciousness and conscience, here it is important to distinguish between "mind (*sadr*)" and "heart" or the conscious soul (*nafs al-mulhamah, qalb*).

> The human mind is in control of the natural world while the "heart" is in control of intuition. There is, then, clearly a barrier between our mind and our "heart," our mind controlling our reason and our "heart" giving us the possibility of intuition.
>
> The mind cannot apprehend the spiritual world and should not attempt to cover the distance that separates knowledge from Divine Reality with a man-made discipline through any rational art. This is why ... (there is a warning) against infiltration of the rational element into spiritual search, and conversely, encroachment of the mystical upon both the philosophical and theological sciences.[22]

Reason brings doubt:

Doubt

The Quran refers several times to "doubt."

It is only those who ask permission of you who believe not in God and the Last Day and whose consciousness is in doubt, so they go this way and that in their doubts. (Q9:45)

Is there a sickness in their consciousness? Or were they in doubt? (Q24:50)

It refers to a barrier being set up between what they lust for causing them to be in grave doubt:

A barrier was set up between them and between that for which they lust ... Truly, they had been uncertain, in grave doubt. (Q34:54)

The Salty Sea of Intuition

Reason is based on acquired knowledge, knowledge acquired through the external and internal senses while intuition is based on what one could almost call "ecstatic love."

> Intuition is imparted directly from God. It cannot be grasped by the sensible faculties, nor by reasoning, nor through acquired sciences. It is linked to the spiritual taste (*dhawq*) and mystical intuition that man finds in his inner self, but he cannot describe it to someone else except through parables or remote examples. Intuitive knowledge is the one that blossoms in the innermost consciousness without any apparent or visible cause.[23]

Intuition is inspired, illuminative, or intuitive knowledge known as vision (*al-ru'yah*).

> Vision (*al-ru'yah*) is the clearest and most truthful proof of inspired learning. It comes as a "message" (*khatir*) from the spiritual world: the veil of slumber is removed, the chains of the external senses are lifted from consciousness and its powers concentrate on the inner life. The (conscious) soul can them discard all truths that

> do not stem from its own world, whether they be straightforward, symbolical, or similitudes. The validity of this type of perception is verified in the states of wakefulness.[24]

If the process of purification of consciousness is undertaken, it appears as an effusion in consciousness. It is called illuminative or revealed learning. As the Quranic sign/verse points out:

We have taught him knowledge that proceeds from Our Presence.

If consciousness is purified and delivered from impurities, then realization is achieved in its most perfect aspect, more perfectly so than by means of the first choice.

> Indeed, the senses and the imagination cannot always be relied upon to transmit faithfully true images to the (conscious) soul, nor can the mind (*sadr*) when it abstracts and orders these very images. Both are only the means and the tools used by the subtle principle to grasp what it can from its own essence. On the other hand, the (conscious) soul does faithfully reflect these images in itself because they originate within it and return to it.[25]

The Quran uses the phrase *ulu-'l-albab*, that is, "those imbued with intuition," those who have deep understanding of things, to distinguish them from those who are merely interested in being "smart."

> *Albab*, plural of *lubb* meaning kernel, the essence and core of something, refers to a deeper perception of the reality of things which we understand through our intuition.... This is when one begins to obtain certainty (*al-yaqin*), which leaves no doubt about the truth of something standing before us.[26]

One has crossed the barrier separating the two seas which they cannot wrong by immorality, etc.

> Given such a scale of intensified perception understanding, through the hierarchy of the five perceptive-cognitive functions ... the Quran propounds the notion of *ulu'l-albab*, the thoughtful individuals who are possessed of proper understanding and response.[27]

God calls to those innately *imbued with intuition.*

O those imbued with intuition ... (Q5:100)

So be God-conscious, O those imbued with intuition! (Q2:197)

This is the delivering of the message to humanity so that they be warned by it and that they know that He is One God so that those imbued with intuition recollect. (Q14:52)

The Quran says:

Have you not considered that God caused to descend water from heaven and threaded fountains in the earth, again, brings out crops by it of hues, ones that are at variance? Again, they wither so you see them as ones that are growing yellow. Again, He makes them chaff. Truly, in this is a reminder for those imbued with intuition. (Q39:21)

Truly, in the creation of the heavens and of the earth and the alteration of nighttime and daytime there are signs for those imbued with intuition ... (Q3:190)

We bestowed on him, his people, and the like of them along with them as a mercy from Us, a reminder for those imbued with intuition. (Q38:43)

Is he one who is morally obligated during the night watch, one who prostrates himself or one who is standing up in prayer being fearful of the world to come and hoping for the mercy of his Lord? Say: Are those who know on the same level as those who know not? Only those imbued with intuition recollect. (Q39:9)

... those who listen to the saying of the Quran and follow the fairer of it. Those are those whom God guided. Those, they are imbued with intuition. (Q39:18)

... as a guidance and a reminder for those imbued with intuition. (Q40:54)

Then, is he who knows what was caused to descend to you from your Lord to be The Truth like he who is unwilling to see? It is only those imbued with intuition who recollect. (Q13:19)

Certainly, there had been in their narratives a lesson for those imbued with intuition.(Q12:111)

Intuition brings certainty:

Certainty

There are three levels of certainty referred to in the Quran: The knowledge of certainty, the eye of certainty and the Truth of certainty, all of which arise out of intuition and not reason.

No indeed! If you will know with the knowledge of certainty. (Q102:5)

Again, you will see it with the eye of certainty. (Q102:7)

Truly, this is The Truth of certainty. (Q56:95) and (Q69:51)

The fact that reason may lead to doubt whereas intuition leads to certainty is a key element in the story. We cannot have certainty if we have doubts nor can we have doubts and certainty at the same time. The barrier, then is the conscious soul that wavers between doubt and certainty so that it is not able to cross. As Rumi says: To take reason into the world of intuition is like taking a lighted candle into the noon day desert sun.

Throughout the rest of the dream of the conscious soul and the sacred intellect, even though the conscious soul has become a "knowing subject," undertaken the greater struggle (*jihad al-akbar*), has purified the animal soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), morally healed and returned to its innate nature (*fitrat Allah*), it remains in the sweet sea of reason when it reaches *the place of meeting of the two seas.* (Q18:60) The conscious soul is not able to let go of reason throughout the dream and is, therefore, confronted by a barrier (*barzakh*) between the two seas as the Quran says:

It is He Who let forth the two seas—this, satisfying water of the sweetest kind (reason) *and this, salty, very salty* (intuitive experience knowledge, "knowledge from Our side," *'ilm la-duni*) *He made between the two a sacred barrier* bound to be refrained from out of a motive of respect or reverence. (Q25:53)

He let forth the two seas to meet one another. Between them ı barrier which they cannot endure. (Q55:19-20)

The conscious soul has to undergo purification (*kashf*) in order to let go of reason so that intuitive experience knowledge (*ma'rifat*) might enter. Reason of the sweet sea is prevented by a barrier from entering the salty sea which is where "knowledge from Our side" is.

The barrier cannot be crossed by acting, wrongfully, injuriously or tyrannically, or being proud, self-conceited with exceeding brashness or to perform acts of a doubtful nature.

(Q12:65) It is also "unapproachable" by free will (*ikhtiyar*) and is only crossed as a Gift from God.

Stage 3 of the Soul: Soul-Spirit/Intellect *Nafs al-Mutma'innah, 'Aql* or The Tranquil Soul at Peace

The Quran refers to tranquility in its signs/verses:

He (God) *it is Who caused the tranquility to descend upon the consciousness of the ones who believe that they add belief to their belief.* (Q48:4)

God caused to descend His tranquility on His Messengers and on the ones who believe and fastened on them the Word of God-consciousness (taqwa). (Q48:26)

He knew what was in their consciousness and He caused the tranquility to descend on them. (Q48:18)

At the third stage of intuitive experience knowledge (*ma'rifat*), or, direct knowledge as in this story, *'ilm laduni*, the conscious soul has to leave reason aside and wait for intuitior to penetrate, if God wills, through the process of "purifying consciousness" or *kashf*.

Purifying Consciousness (*kashf*)

The conscious soul is now preparing to actualize its potential to transform into the stage of the soul-spirit/intellect. The soul-spirit/intellect is known by many different names such as the soul at peace (*nafs al-mutma'innah*), intellect or reason (*'aql*), spirit (*ruh*) by God's command (*amr*), kernel (*lubb*) or intuition, rational soul (*nafs al-natiqah*), or rational intellect (*'aql al-natiqah*). It manifests the spirit/light of unity because the conscious soul has undergone the greater struggle and spiritual exercises in order to discipline the animal soul. It is now able to actualize the conscious soul's (f) potential for transforming into the spirit (m). It does this through the process of *kashf* or purification

of consciousness, thereby giving birth to the final stage of the soul's evolution, that of our soul-spirit/intellect (*nafs al-mutma'innah*).

Kashf takes place when consciousness goes beyond "intellect" or "reason." Purity of consciousness is something that a seeker actually experiences as a personal divine inspiration. It is during this process that divine truths enter into consciousness.

> Lightning flash or dawn is always like an irruption of light coming from outside which then appears in the various stages and spiritual states of the phenomenon of *kashf*. It marks the entrance into a new manner of apprehending reality, a superior manner, the effect of divine Self-disclosure (*tajalli*), an immediate and certain knowledge which goes beyond all discursive argument and all argumentative proof, rational or traditional.[28]

Spiritual experience becomes an article of faith. It lays the foundation for certainty, the assured certainty of genuine faith (as opposed to faith received purely by being handed down, *taqlid*):

> The key to most of the branches of knowledge is the light (*nur*) which God shines into consciousness. Whoever imagines that *kashf* depends on logically-arranged arguments reduces the immensely wide mercy of God to narrow proportions. *Kashf* must be sought from this divine light.[29]

Two Quranic signs/verses indicate the concept of *kashf*:

Certainly, you had been heedless of this so We removed your veil from you so that your sight this Day will be sharp. (Q50:22)

The Impending Day is impending. There is not other than God, One Who Uncovers it. (Q53:57-58)

Kashf, meaning illumination or epiphany, is to make the mysterious senses and the realities which are hidden to appear in a complete and actual realization.[30]

Therefore, *kashf* is a light, a freely bestowed gift or grace from God, which at the same time alone bestows its quality of knowledge of certainty.[31]

There are three stages to *kashf*: *muhadara*, *mukashafa* and *mushahida*. Each relates to one of the encounters in the narration as the conscious soul follows the sacred intellect as well as the stages, levels and phases of consciousness.

Phase 1 of Purifying Consciousness (*kashf*)
Inspiration by Reason (*muhadara*)

In this anagoge, consciousness is being taught how to purify itself on the plane of created things as a result of pious actions and purification of the animal soul in the first encounter, the damaging of the vessel in which the conscious soul and the sacred intellect are sitting along with others. The result of the whole journey, devotion and recollections is that consciousness becomes free from all besides God, that is, God-conscious.

> It is made ready for constant Presence and vision so that it keeps in its hand the thread of patience in affliction through contentment with fate (the thread) of enduring distasteful events and that of strength to refrain from carnal desires.[32]

So they both set out until when they embarked in a vessel, he made a hole in it. He said: Have you made a hole in it in order to drown the people? Certainly you have brought about a dreadful thing. He said: Did I not say that you would not be able to have patience with me? (Q18:71-72)[33] *He said: Take me not to task for what I forgot and constrain me not with hardship for my affair.* (Q18:73) ....

At the first encounter with a vessel, symbolizing the body, the sacred intellect damages it through strenuous spiritual exercises such as supererogatory prayers, extra fasting and sessions of "remembering God" (*dhikr*). This involves *muhadara*.

Muhadara is the stage where one is "present," "prepared," and ready" to attain the goal that is sought. The goal remains hidden here and is conditioned by the presence of consciousness. This stage relies on the transmission of proof through reason/intellect. However:

> The person who restricts himself within the guidance of the intellect (*'aql*) can only apprehend God through His miraculous signs (*ayat*). The first degree is acceptance of the Word of God (certain knowledge, a degree of certainty), a state in which proof cannot in any way describe. *Muhadara* is the presence of consciousness in the subtleties of proof.[34]

At the end of the three events, the sacred intellect explains the spiritual/intuitive meaning of the event. At the end of the damaging of the vessel, it explains:

As for the vessel, it had been of some needy people who toiled in the sea, (Q18:79)

> That is, sensation/perception saving from being killed by the ego king of the sea of the material world or the physical faculties of the outer senses and the natural faculties. Certainly He named them the poor people because of their persisting in peace; their preservering with the dust of the body; their weakness in preventing consciousness from the journey; and the predominance of consciousness like the effect of the vital faculties. It has been said they were ten brothers, five of them were earthly and five of them worked in the sea. This indicates the exterior and interior senses or sensation (seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and feeling) and perception (common sense, representation, estimation, memory and imagination).[35]

I wanted to mar it as there had been a king behind them taking every vessel forcefully. (18:79)

> I damaged the body through asceticism so that the king of the egoistic (animal) soul would not take it through force. He was the king who was before them who was seizing every ship by brutal force through the predominance upon that ship and the using of that for his own desires and purpose.
>
> This ego/king is the animal soul that incites to wrongdoing (*nafs al-ammarah bi'l su'*) which will no longer be able to arise to seize consciousness and intuition. This was the ego/king who wanted to take over. The animal soul was made defective so the ego/king could not use the body for its own lust and pleasure.[36]

In other words, they avoid the ego/animal soul that incites to evil, but it is still alive.

Phase 2 of Purifying Consciousness (*kashf*) Reason Gives Way to Intuitive Proof (*mukashafa*)

Then they both set out until when they met a boy. Then, he killed him. He said: Have you killed a pure soul without his having slain a soul? Certainly you have brought about a horrible thing! He said: Did I not say that you would not be able to have patience with me? He said: If I asked you about anything after this, then, keep not company with me. Surely you have reached enough of excusing from my presence! (Q18:75-76)

With the second encounter, they meet a boy symbolizing that aspect of the soul which commands to wrongdoing (*nafs al-ammarah bi'l su'*). The sacred intellect kills that aspect of soul which commands to wrongdoing because it is affecting the faith in the One God of the inner soul-spirit/intellect and the body, symbolized by the boy's parents in order for them to maintain steadfastness (*istiqamah*).

As for the boy, both is parents had been ones who believe, and we dreaded that he should constrain them with defiance and ingratitude (by the animal soul that commands to wrongdoing), *so we wanted their Lord to cause for them in exchange one better than he in purity and nearer in sympathy.* (Q18:80-81)

When the aspect of the soul which commands to wrongdoing is slain, consciousness can then manifest courage (trust in the One God) and temperance (charity towards others).

Mukashafa, the second stage of purification of consciousness (*kashf*) is the presence of the inner secret in the field of intuition. *Kashf* and *mukashafa* are thus freely put into connection with the superior worlds, those beyond the senses. *Mukashafa* is the lifting of the covering, watching for the lightning flash as a sign of its purification. There is no further need to search for the way. Reasoning gives way to evident proof and the indirect indications of God disappear before His attributes. But this stage is still only an intermediary one, a kind of "raising of the curtain" on the world of mystery after purification of the animal soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs)* and consciousness (*tazkiyat al-qalb*). This second degree goes beyond the sphere of argument.[37]

ase 3 of Purifying Consciousness (*kashf*)
ect Vision (*mushahida*)

Then they both set out until when they approached a people of own. They asked its people for food. They refused to receive m as guests. Then they found in it a wall that wants to tumble own, so he repaired it. He said: If you had willed, certainly, you would have taken compensation to yourself for it. He said: This is the parting between me and you! I will tell you the interpretation for which you were not able to have patience. (Q18:78)

Finally, they come to a wall that is crumbling. The wall symbolizes the soul at peace (*nafs al-mutma'innah, 'aql*), the stage when once attained is described as tranquility.

They asked its people, the physical forces, *for food,* spiritual nourishment, *but they refused to receive them as guests.* That is, they refused to give them spiritual nourishment. (Q18:78)

> The conscious soul saying that the sacred intellect could have taken a wage for building up the wall is to mention immediate rewards for doing good. This shows that the conscious soul is still attached to reason.[38]

Mushahida or direct vision is the third and final stage of purification of consciousness (*kashf*), the presence of the reality without the intermediacy of proof, even intuitive proof and which opens onto the divine Essence. This third stage, *mushahada,* is direct vision where there is an immediate encounter with Reality without either reason/intellect or intuition, but rather *'ilm laduni* or knowledge directly from God without human intermediary.[38] This is also the third degree of certainty or "real certainty" that presupposes the sudden breaking of the dawn of "unveiling" or "purification of consciousness."

As for the wall, it had been that of two orphan boys in the cit and beneath it had been a treasure for them. The father of both o them had been one who acted in accord with morality so your Lord wanted that they be fully grown, having come of age ... (Q18:82)

The treasure consisted of *'ilm laduni.* That is, the treasure does not appear except through the presence of the purified consciousness, being aware of both its motivational (*nafs al-ammarah*) and cognitive systems (mind (*sadr*), conscience (*nafs al-lawwamah, fu'ad*), and spirit/intellect (*nafs al-mutma'innah, 'aql*)). That is the state of reaching full strength and the bringing forth of that treasure.

... and pull out their treasure as a mercy from your Lord. (Q18:82)

That is, beneath the soul at peace there was a treasure which is *'ilm laduni* which can only be reached in the station of the purified consciousness, and, then, only if God wills. That is the state of nearing higher realms, attaining what is most important. This is the time to extract the treasure.

Finally, the sacred intellect says

I accomplished that not of my own command. (Q18:82)

It was a Gift from God.

Reason alone is not enough for prophethood. There is also a need for knowledge of the inner world with knowledge of certainty, the eye of certainty and the Truth of certainty which occurs only if God wills.

This is the interpretation of what you were not able to have patience for. (Q18:82)

Endnotes to Part 3

1 See *Quranic Psychology of the Self: A Textbook on Islamic Moral Psychology.*

2 Avicenna referred to the sacred intellect. Moses may refer to the person who later became prophet or to someone else named Moses. The story itself does not make it clear who he was. However, this analysis is based on a young man who held the potential for prophethood which was actualized sometime after this dream vision.

3 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)," in *History of Muslim Philosophy.* Online.

4 William Chittick, *Science of the Soul, Science of the Cosmos.* Online.

5 As an expression of some form of action, *qalb*, as this flipping or turning over, so *inqilab,* as a verb, can be used in the Quran for turning on their heels, or changing direction to retreat and flee from battle, or, as a noun, to mean the act of overthrowing someone, where a sense of a flip in power or revolution literally is expressed. It is also used in its passive sense to express being turned, rather re-turned, to God after death. Al-Raghib points out, however, that the heart (*qalb*) is not the same as the intellect/spirit (*'aql, ruh*), but that the heart is often generalized as the intellect the same way that a river does not literally run, but rather its water runs, but the running is generalized to the river because it contains the water. In addition, Al-Jurjani refers to it as the 'true essence of a human being', while al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi, who dedicated an entire book to the difference between the words for 'heart', said the *qalb* contains all levels of inner being.William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy.* Online.

6 Ibn Arabi describes the possibility as "inner receptivity."(James Winston Morris, *The Reflective Heart: Discovering Spiritual Intelligence in Ibn Arabi's Meccan Illuminations.*

7 Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar* (*Spiritual Psychology: The Fourth Intellectual Journey in Transcendent Philosophy*), Volumes VIII and IX, pp 43-44; 121.

8 al-Ghazzali, *On Knowing Yourself and God*, p. 7.

9 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy.* Online.

10 William Chittick, *Science of the Soul, Science of the Cosmos.* Online.

11 See http://seekershub.org/ansblog/2009.

12 See Hakim Tirmidhi, *Bayn al-farq bayn al-sadr wa-al-qalb wa-al fu'ad wa-al lubb.* Online.

13 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il.* Online.

14 William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 107. Our *nafs*

al-mulhamah is called *consciousness* because of the rapidity of its turning over.

15 William Chittick, *Heart of Islamic Philosophy*. Online. The root verb (*fatara*) means to split or cleave and implies opening up and coming out, to bring forth, to originate.

16 The Quran mentions *fitrat* as the creation of God that does not change (30:30). It also talked about the stability of God's laws (Q35:43), (Q48:23) and (Q17:77). Is God's creation stable and unchanging? If it were stable and fixed what then is the role of humans in building civilization that involves changing *fitrat* by cutting down forests, breeding animals, controlling rivers, and cultivating the land? God's creation changes daily as we watch humans and other creations grow old and change and we watch the physical universe undergo changes even without the agency of humans. We can understand from this that changes are part of God's creation. God commanded humans to make changes in the universe as part of human vicegerency and human civilization on earth. Thus the unchanging creation mentioned in (Q30:30) is understood to be constancy of the laws that govern the universe, *sunan*, as expounded in (Q35:43), (Q48:23) and (Q17:77). Thus changes can be made as long as they follow the laws laid down by God. Any changes that do not follow these laws are repudiated. See with changes by this author: http://omarkasule.tripod.com/id155.html

17 Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Philosophy: Mulla Sadra on Existence, Intellect and Intuition*. Online.

18 See p 37.

19 See p 37.

20 Edward Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*: *barzakh*: a thing that intervenes between two things; a thing that causes separation between two things; barrier between certainty and doubt.

21 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il*. Online.

22 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il*. Online.

23 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il*. Online.

24 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il*. Online.

25 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il*. Online.

26 Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Philosophy: Mulla Sadra on Existence, Intellect and Intuition*. Online

27 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il*

li tahdhib al-masa'il. Online.

28 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il.* Online.

29 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il.* Online.

30 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il.* Online.

31 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il.* Online.

32 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il.* Online.

33 Another indication that this story happened before Moses was elevated to prophethood. The sacred intellect says to the inspired soul that it will not have patience to bear with it. This is repeated several times. It was a teaching lesson to Moses to learn patience which he clearly did as we see in another sign/verse of the Quran where Moses says to his people: *Moses said to his folk: Pray for help from God and have patience. Truly, the earth belongs to God. He gives it as inheritance to whom He wills of His servants. That is the Ultimate End for the ones who are God conscious.* (Q7:128)

34 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il.* Online.

35 *Sufism in Ibn Khaldun: An Annotated Translation of Shifa al-sa'il li tahdhib al-masa'il.* Online.

36 See pp 37, 42.

37 It is interesting to note that *'Ilm al-mukashafa* or the science of intuitive vision is the knowledge of what is concealed and it is the aim of all the sciences. It is a light which bears upon God, His essence, His angels, His acts, the prophets and the future life. It is not argumentation, nor simple acceptance, but an intuitive and sure grasping of the subject. By *'ilm al-mukashafa* we mean the pulling aside of the covering so that the Real One shows Himself in all His splendor and this is effected with a clarity which sets the object present right before the eyes, without any possible grounds for doubt. See al-Ghazzali, *Munqidh.*

38 *Encyclopedia of Islam,* Volume IV.

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